Colin M. Turnbull 000

THE FOREST PEOPLE

Simon and Schuster · New York

[Title Page]

[P. 1]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

To Kenge

000

for whom the forest was Mother and Father, Lover and Friend; and who showed me something of the love that all his people share in a world that is still kind and good . . . And without evil.

[P.3]
[P.4 is blank]

Acknowledgments

000 THIS BOOK tries to convey something of the lives and feelings of a people who live in a forest world, something of their intense love for that world and their trust in it. It is a world that will soon be gone forever, and with it the people.

In whatever measure the book succeeds it is due to those who by their example have taught the way to understanding. More than any I must thank my parents, who first taught me the meaning of love, and Anandamai Ma, who for two years in India showed how the qualities of truth, goodness and beauty can be found wherever we care to look for them.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

000 And then I must thank Professor Evans Pritchard, a more austere teacher, who teaches all his students that the study of man should be approached not necessarily without emotion but with careful, scientific impartiality.

To my colleagues at the American Museum of Natural History, particularly Professor Harry L. Shapiro, I am grateful for their encouragement and interest and for their constant reminder that an anthropologist can still be human as well as scientific.

There are many other friends who should be thanked for help in divers ways, not the least one who prefers to remain anonymous but who painstakingly read and reread every page. But Patrick Putnam deserves special mention, because it was through his friendship and hospitality, and that of his wife, that I first came to know the forest. I only wish he had lived to write this book himself. I must also acknowledge a debt to Dr. Paul Schebesta, who was the first to open the way to this wonderful world, my thanks for his encouragement and my great respect for his tolerance of dissenting youth.

And finally I must acknowledge a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid to all those people of the forest who can neither read nor write but who are infinitely wise and who taught me something of their wisdom. I hope this book will convey a small part of their intense love for the forest and their belief that it is better and kinder than the outside world that threatens to destroy it.

C. M. T.

[P. 6]

Foreword

THE FOREST PEOPLE is about the life of a Pygmy people living in the Ituri Forest in the Congo. Its author is an anthropologist. The book is exceptional. 114

These three statements do not—alas—form a syllogism, but they do have some connection with each other; and together they help to explain why reading *The Forest People* is an unusual and satisfying experience. Most of the literature on the life of "primitive" people is in the form of fairly technical reports in which individuals are swallowed up by abstractions and feeling is replaced by analysis.

14 There is nothing wrong with this for the purpose it serves. But you get little idea from these monographs of what it is like to lead the kind of life they describe, or what the people observed are really like as human beings.

One might conclude from this that anthropologists with their special orientation were not the best suited to give us a non-technical, humanized, and personalized view of primitive people. It is my belief that the contrary is the case. Their special techniques, their sympathy, and their understanding make them in fact ideal interpreters. Indeed, it is the professional interest of the anthropologist in primitive societies, in the first place, that drives them to devote the years of patient study and observation that are required for the insight they seek. And, in the second, their rigorous analytical methods guarantee some measure of the objectivity without which the less wary observer is often led into sentiment and bias.

One of the reasons why *The Forest People* is an exceptional book is because its author, Colin M. Turnbull, is an anthropologist who knows the Pygmies intimately from years of living among them. In this book he has fortunately chosen the unusual course of writing about them as individuals, as his friends, each with a personality of his own. From his knowledge of their culture and its adaptation to the conditions of an African rain forest, he is able to provide another dimension to their lives that the casual visitor might easily miss altogether. As a result the reader can enter into some understanding of the meaning of their lives and enjoy the exhilaration of participating in a culture other than his own.

HARRY L. SHAPIRO
Chairman and Curator
of Physical Anthropology

January 1962
American Museum of Natural History

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Maps

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Maps by Nicholas Amorosi

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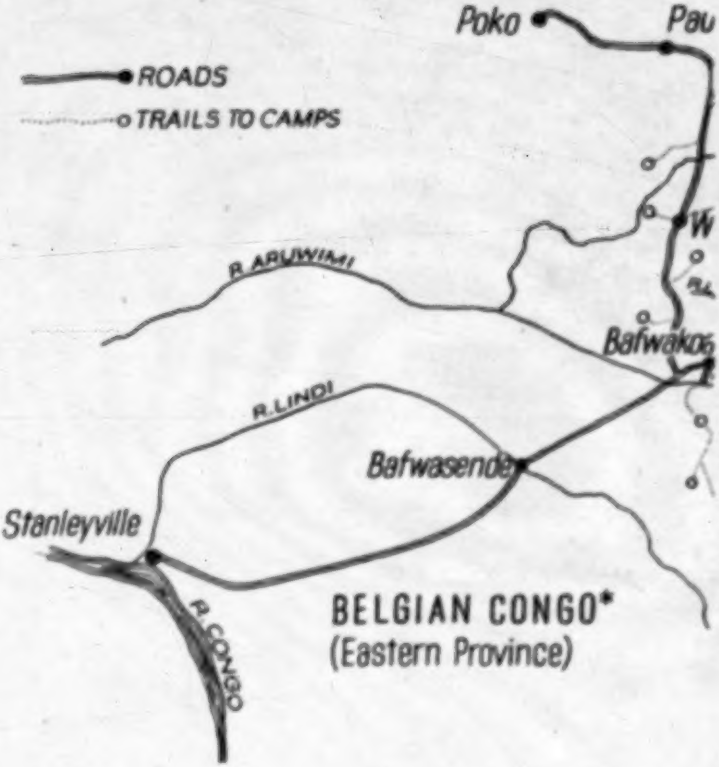
Poko
Pau
ROADS
TRAILS TO CAMPS
W
R. ARUWIMI
Bafwako
R. LINDI
Bafwasende
Stanleyville
R. CONGO
BELGIAN CONGO*
(Eastern Province)

Map 1: The Eastern Province of the Congo.

**Now Republic of the Congo*

[P.10-B]

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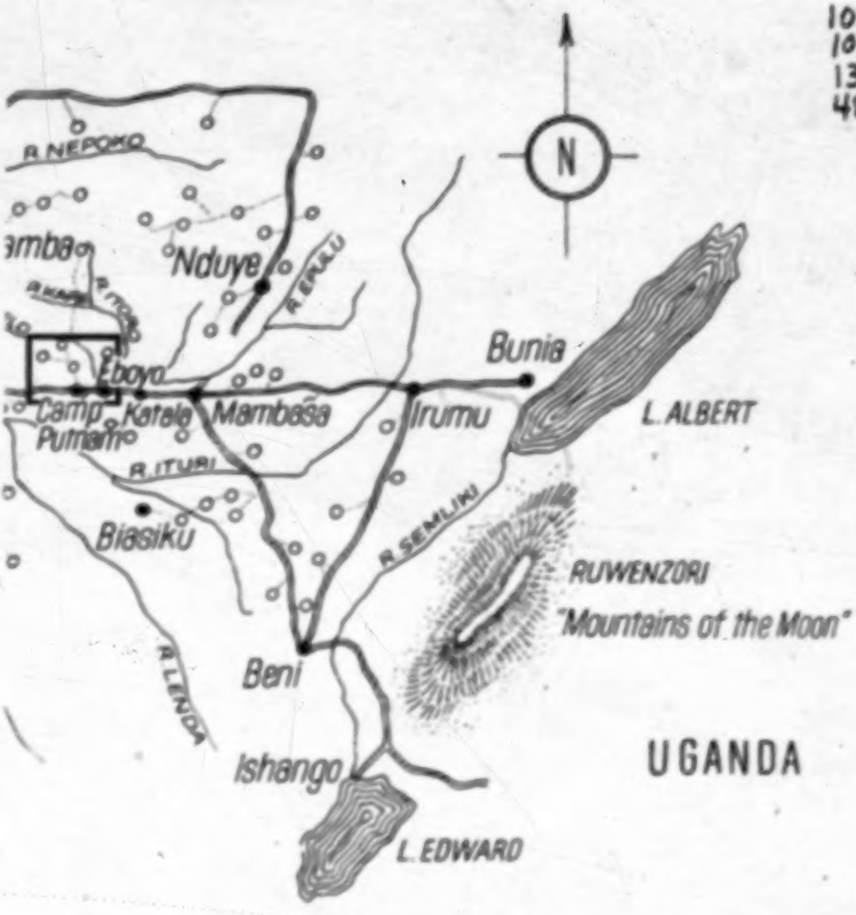
N
R. NEPOKO
amba
Nduye
R. EPULU
R. ITURI
Eboyo
Camp
Putnam
Katele
Mambasa
Irumu
Bunia
L. ALBERT
R. ITURI
Biasiku
R. SEMLIKI
RUWENZORI
"Mountains of the Moon"
Beni
R. LENDA
Ishango
L. EDWARD
UGANDA

Area of Map 2

[P. 10-C]

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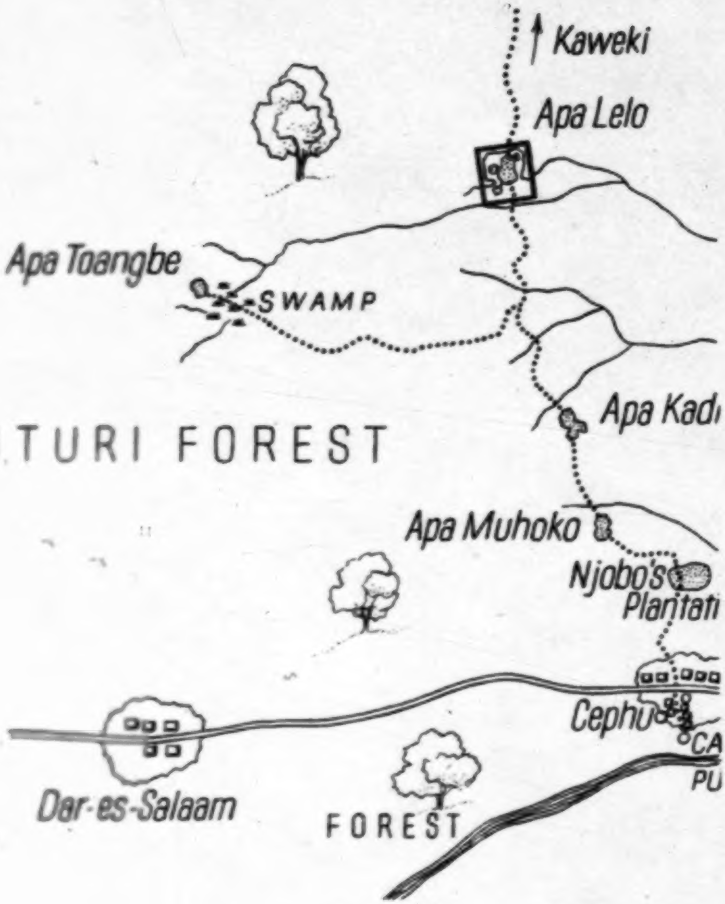
Kaweki
Apa Lelo
Apa Toangbe
SWAMP
ITURI FOREST
Apa Kadı
Apa Muhoko
Njobo's
Plantati
Cephu
CA
PU
Dar-es-Salaam
FOREST

MAP 2: Detail map of the Ituri Forest, showing approximate positions of Pygmy camps, trails and plantations.

[P.10-D]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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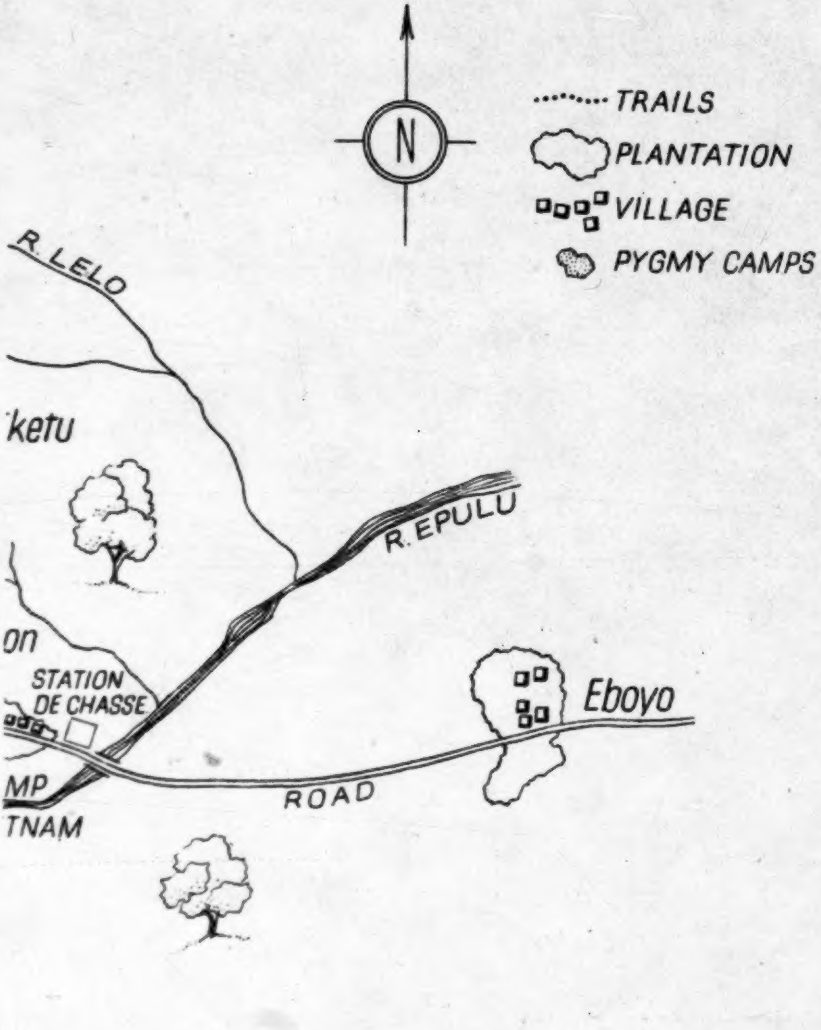
N
TRAILS
PLANTATION
VILLAGE
PYGMY CAMPS
R. LELO
ketu
R. EPULU
on
STATION
DE CHASSE
Eboyo
MP
TNAM
ROAD

☐ Area of Map 3

[P. 10-E]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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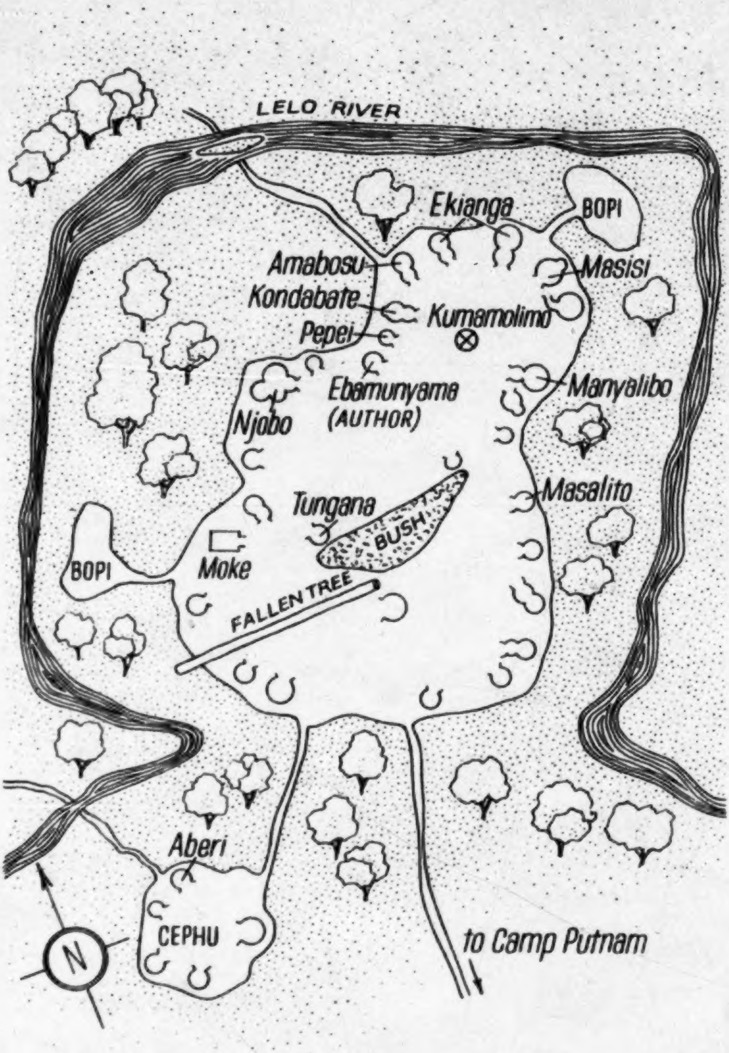
LELO RIVER
Ekianga
BOPI
Masisi
Amabosu
Kondabate
Kumamolimo
Pepei
Manyalibo
Ebamunyama
(AUTHOR)
Njabo
Masalito
Tungana
BUSH
BOPI
Moke
FALLEN TREE
Aberi
CEPHU
N
to Camp Putnam

Map 3: Apa Lelo

[P. 10-F]

1

The World of the Forest

IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER of the Belgian Congo, almost exactly 131
in the middle of the map of Africa, . . . lies the Ituri Forest, a vast 175
expanse of dense, damp and inhospitable-looking darkness. Here is the heart of Stanley's Dark Continent, the country he loved and hated, the scene of his ill-fated expedition to relieve Emin Pasha, an expedition costing hundreds of lives and imposing almost unbearable hardships on the survivors, who trekked across the great forest not once, but three times, losing more lives each time through fighting, sickness and desertion.

Anyone who has stood in the silent emptiness of a tropical rain 000

132 Anyone who has
137 stood in the silent emptiness of a tropical rain
forest must know how Stanley and his followers felt, coming as they all did from an open country of rolling plains, of sunlight and warmth. Many people who have visited the Ituri since, and many who have lived there, feel just the same, overpowered by the heaviness of everything—the damp air, the gigantic water-laden trees that are constantly dripping, never quite drying out between the violent storms that come with monotonous regularity, the very earth itself heavy and cloying after the slightest shower. And, above all, such people feel overpowered by the seeming silence and the age-old remoteness and loneliness of it all.

132 But these are the feelings of outsiders, of those who do not belong
137 to the forest. If you *are* of the forest it is a very different place. What
182 seems to other people to be eternal and depressing gloom becomes a
cool, restful, shady world with light filtering lazily through the tree tops that meet high overhead and shut out the direct sunlight—the sunlight that dries up the non-forest world of the outsiders and makes it hot and dusty and dirty.

136 Even the silence is a myth. If you have ears for them, the forest
137 is full of sounds—exciting, mysterious, mournful, joyful. The shrill
182 trumpeting of an elephant, the sickening cough of a leopard (or the
825 hundred and one sounds that can be mistaken for it), always makes
your heart beat a little unevenly, telling you that you are just the slightest bit scared, or even more. At night, in the honey season, you hear a weird, long-drawn-out, soulful cry high up in the trees. It seems to go on and on, and you wonder what kind of creature can cry for so long without taking breath. The people of the forest say it is the chameleon, telling them that there is honey nearby. Scientists will tell you that chameleons are unable to make any such sound. But the forest people of faraway Ceylon also know the song of the chameleon. Then in the early morning comes the pathetic cry of the pigeon, a plaintive cooing that slides from one note down to the next until it dies away in a soft, sad, little moan.

THE WORLD OF THE FOREST

P
There are a multitude of sounds, but most of them are as joyful 136
as the brightly colored birds that chase one another through the trees, 182
singing as they go, or the chatter of the handsome black-and-white 825
Colobus monkeys as they leap from branch to branch, watching with
curiosity everything that goes on down below. And the most joyful P
sound of all, to me, is the sound of the voices of the forest people 182
as they sing a lusty chorus of praise to this wonderful world of theirs 533
—a world that gives them everything they want. This cascade of sound echoes among the giant trees until it seems to come at you from all sides in sheer beauty and truth and goodness, full of the joy of living. But if you are an outsider from the non-forest world, I suppose this glorious song would just be another noise to grate on your nerves.

C
The world of the forest is a closed, possessive world, hostile to all
those who do not understand it. At first sight you might think it 182
hostile to all human beings, because in every village you find the
same suspicion and fear of the forest, that blank, impenetrable wall. C
The villagers are friendly and hospitable to strangers, offering them [609] [594]
the best of whatever food and drink they have, and always clearing
out a house where the traveler can rest in comfort and safety. But C
these villages are set among plantations in great clearings cut from 182
the heart of the forest around them. It is from the plantations that 241
the food comes, not from the forest, and for the villagers life is a 361
constant battle to prevent their plantations from being overgrown.

They speak of the world beyond the plantations as being a fearful C
place, full of malevolent spirits and not fit to be lived in except by 776
animals and BaMbuti, which is what the village people call the 182
Pygmies. The villagers, some Bantu and some Sudanic, keep to their 825
plantations and seldom go into th[illegible]rest unless it is absolutely necessary. 829
For them it is a place of evil. They are outsiders.

P
But the BaMbuti are the real people of the forest. Whereas the 182
other tribes are relatively recent arrivals, the Pygmies have been in

182 the forest for many thousands of years. It is their world, and in re-
turn for their affection and trust it supplies them with all their needs.
182 They do not have to cut the forest down to build plantations, for
824 they know how to hunt the game of the region and gather the wild
825 fruits that grow in abundance there, though hidden to outsiders. They
know how to distinguish the innocent-looking *itaba* vine from the
many others it resembles so closely, and they know how to follow
it until it leads them to a cache of nutritious, sweet-tasting roots.
[821] They know the tiny sounds that tell where the bees have hidden their
honey; they recognize the kind of weather that brings a multitude
of different kinds of mushrooms springing to the surface; and they
know what kinds of wood and leaves often disguise this food. The
exact moment when termites swarm, at which they must be caught
to provide an important delicacy, is a mystery to any but the people
of the forest. They know the secret language that is denied all out-
siders and without which life in the forest is an impossibility.

181 The BaMbuti roam the forest at will, in small isolated bands or
hunting groups. They have no fear, because for them there is no
danger. For them there is little hardship, so they have no need for
[141] belief in evil spirits. For them it is a good world. The fact that they
average less than four and a half feet in height is of no concern to
them; their taller neighbors, who jeer at them for being so puny, are
as clumsy as elephants—another reason why they must always re-
main outsiders in a world where your life may depend on your ability
to run swiftly and silently. And if the Pygmies are small, they are
powerful and tough.

174 How long they have lived in the forest we do not know, though it is a considered opinion that they are among the oldest inhabitants of Africa. They may well be the original inhabitants of the great tropical rain forest which stretches nearly from coast to coast. They were certainly well established there at the very beginning of historic times.

THE WORLD OF THE FOREST

The earliest recorded reference to them is not Homer's famous lines about the battle between the Pygmies and the cranes, as one might think, but a record of an expedition sent from Egypt in the Fourth Dynasty, some twenty-five hundred years before the Christian era, to discover the source of the Nile. In the tomb of the Pharaoh Nefrikare is preserved the report of his commander, Herkouf, who entered a great forest to the west of the Mountains of the Moon and discovered there a people of the trees, a tiny people who sing and dance to their god, a dance such as had never been seen before. Nefrikare sent a reply ordering Herkouf to bring one of these Dancers of God back with him, giving explicit instructions as to how he should be treated and cared for so that no harm would come to him. Unfortunately that is where the story ends, though later records show that the Egyptians had become relatively familiar with the Pygmies, who were evidently living, all those thousands of years back, just where they are living today, and leading much the same kind of life, characterized, as it still is, by dancing and singing to their god.

When Homer refers to the Pygmies, in describing a battle between Greek and Trojan forces in the *Iliad*, he may well be relying on information from Egyptian sources, but the element of myth is already creeping in.

When by their sev'ral chiefs the troops were rang'd,
With noise and clamour, as a flight of birds,
The men of Troy advanc'd; as when the cranes,
Flying the wintry storms, send forth on high
Their dissonant clamours, while o'er th'ocean stream
They steer their course, and on their pinions bear
*Battle and death to the Pygmaean race.**

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* Homer, *Iliad* (tr. Derby), III, 1-7.

175 By Aristotle's time the Western world was evidently still more inclined to treat the Pygmies as legend, because Aristotle himself has to state categorically that their existence is no fable, as some men believe, but the truth, and that they live in the land "from which flows the Nile." *

Mosaics in Pompeii show that, whether the Pygmies were believed to be fable or not, the makers of the mosaics in fact knew just how they lived, even the kinds of huts they built in the forest. But from then until the turn of the present century, our knowledge of the Pygmies decreased to the point where they were thought of as mythical creatures, semi-human, flying about in tree tops, dangling by their tails, and with the power of making themselves invisible. The cartographer who drew the thirteenth-century Mappa Mundi, preserved in Hereford Cathedral, England, located the Pygmies accurately enough, but his representations show them as subhuman monsters.

Evidently there was still some question as to their reality up to the seventeenth century, because the English anatomist Edward Tyson felt obliged to publish a treatise on "The Anatomy of a Pygmie compared with that of a Monkey, an Ape, and a Man." He had obtained from Africa the necessary skeletons, on which he based his conclusion that the so-called "pygmie" was, quite definitely, not human. The "pygmie" skeleton was preserved until recently in a London museum, and it was easy to see how Tyson arrived at so firm a conclusion. The skeleton was that of a chimpanzee.

Portuguese explorers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were responsible for many of the more extravagant accounts. It may well be that they actually did see Pygmies near the west coast of Africa, or they may have seen chimpanzees and mistaken them for Pygmies. But it is curious that they should have thought of the Pygmies as being able to make themselves invisible, and also as having the power, small as they were, to kill elephants.

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[113] * Aristotle, *Historia Animalium* (tr. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson), vii, 2.

ing the power, small as they were, to kill elephants. The Pygmies 000
today still kill elephants single-handed, armed only with a short- 224
handled spear. And they blend so well with the forest foliage that you can pass right by without seeing them. As for their having tails, 291
it is easy enough to see how this story came into being, if the Pyg- [175]
mies seen by the Portuguese dressed as they do today, as is more than likely. The loincloth they wear is made of the bark of a tree, softened and hammered out until it is a long slender cloth, tucked between the legs and over a belt, front and back. The women particularly like to have a long piece of cloth so that it hangs down behind, almost to the ground. They say it looks well when dancing.

Some of the accounts of nineteenth-century travelers in the Congo 175
are no less fanciful, and it was George Schweinfurth who first made known to the world, in his book *The Heart of Africa,* that Pygmies not only existed but were human. He was following in the path of the Italian explorer Miani, who a few years earlier had reached the Ituri but had died before he could return. One of the most curious of little-known stories about the Pygmies is that Miani actually sent two of them back to Italy, to the Geographic Association, which had sponsored his trip. The president of the association, Count Miniscalchi of Verona, took the two boys and educated them. Contemporary newspaper reports describe them as strolling the boulevards, arm in arm with their Italian friends, chatting in Italian. One of them even learned to play the piano. From the present Count Miniscalchi I learned that both Pygmies eventually returned to Africa, where one died and the other became a saddler in the Ethiopian army. He last heard from the latter, who must then have been an old man, just before the outbreak of World War II.

Stanley describes his meetings with the Pygmies in the Ituri, but 175
without telling us much about them, and indeed little was known 114
beyond the actual fact of their existence until a White Father, the

175 Reverend Paul Schebesta, set out from Vienna in the nineteen-twen-
114 ties to study them.

114 Schebesta's first trip was an over-all survey of the forest area, in
144 which he established the fact that this was a stronghold of the pure
Pygmy, as opposed to the "Pygmoid" in other parts of the equatorial belt, where there has been intermarriage with Negro tribes. In subsequent trips Schebesta gathered material which showed that these Ituri Pygmies—whose term for themselves, BaMbuti, he adopts—are in fact racially distinct from the Negro peoples, Bantu and Sudanic, who live around them. This fact has been confirmed by later
174 genetic studies, up to the present. Though we cannot be sure, it seems reasonable to assume that the BaMbuti were the original inhabitants of the great tropical rain forest stretching from the west coast right across to the open savanna country of the east, on the far side of the chain of lakes that divides the Congo from East Africa.

114 But when I read Schebesta's account of the Pygmies it just did not
533 ring true when compared with my own experiences on my first trip
to the Ituri. For instance, in one of his first books he says that the Pygmies are not great musicians, but that they sing only the simplest melodies and beat on drums and dance wild erotic dances. Even much later, after he had come to know the Pygmies better and had spent several years in the region, when he wrote his major work, running to several volumes, he devoted only a few pages to music, attributing little importance to it and dismissing it as simple and undeveloped. This could not have been further from the truth.

114 In several other ways I felt that all was not well with Schebesta's
177 account, particularly with his description of the relationship between
Pygmies and Negroes. He gave the impression that the Pygmies were dependent on the Negroes both for food and for metal products and that there was an unbreakable hereditary relationship by which a Pygmy and all his progeny were handed down in a Negro family, from father to son, and bound to it in a form of serfdom, not only

hunting but also working on plantations, cutting wood and drawing 114
water. None of this was true of the Pygmies that I knew. But I did 177
agree with Schebesta about the *molimo* (a religious festival). Although
he had not seen it himself, from what he heard about it and
about similar practices among other groups of Pygmies, he felt sure
that it was essentially different from the practices of neighboring
Negroes, however similar they might appear to be on the surface.
This certainly tallied with my own experience.

The general picture that emerged from his studies was that there 114
were, living in the Ituri Forest, some 35,000 BaMbuti Pygmies, 101 177
divided into three linguistic groups, speaking dialects of three major [161]
Negro languages. The Pygmies seemed to have lost their own language, [174]
due to the process of acculturation though traces remained, [177]
especially in tonal pattern. Only in the easternmost group did Schebesta
feel that the language had survived to any recognizable extent. [184]
These were the Efe Pygmies who lived among the BaLese, an eastern
Sudanic tribe with a not very savory reputation for cannibalism,
witchcraft and sorcery.

But in spite of this linguistic difference, and the fact that the Efe 114
also differed in that they did not hunt with nets but with bow and 105
arrow and spear, Schebesta believed that all the BaMbuti were a [184] [411]
single cultural unit. They tended to live in small groups of from three
families upward, moving around the forest from camp to camp,
though always attached to some Negro village with which they
traded meat for plantation products. There was no form of chieftainship,
and no mechanism for maintaining law and order, and it was
difficult—from Schebesta's account—to see what prevented these
isolated groups from falling into complete chaos. The most powerful 114
unifying factor, it appeared, was the domination of the Pygmies by 105
the Negroes. Schebesta cited the *nkumbi* initiation as an example of 177
the way Negroes forced the BaMbuti to accept their authority and
that of their tribal lore. Remembering what I had seen, living in an

114 105 177 initiation camp, I could not accept this point of view at all. Yet it was one shared by others, some of whom had lived in the area for years.

114 177 The explanation was simple enough, and it was not that either one of us was right and the other wrong. Whereas Father Schebesta had always had to work through Negroes, and largely in Negro villages, I had been fortunate in being able to make direct contact with the Pygmies, and in fact had spent most of my time with them away from Negro influence. Other Europeans had also only seen the Pygmies either in Negro villages or on Negro plantations. But I had seen enough of them both in the forest and in the village to know that they were completely different people in the two sets of circumstances. All that we knew of them to date had been based on observations made either in the villages or in the presence of Negroes.

114 Whereas my first visit to the Ituri Forest, in 1951, had been made mainly out of curiosity, I had seen enough to make me want to return to this area for more intensive study. An ideal location was provided by a strange establishment set up on the banks of the Epulu River back in the nineteen-twenties by an American anthropologist, Patrick Putnam.* He had gone there to do his field work but had liked the place and the people so much that he decided to stay. He built himself a huge mud mansion, and gradually a village grew up around him and became known as "Camp Putnam." The Pygmies treated it just as they treated any other Bantu village (the main Negro tribes nearby were the BaBira and BaNdaka, with a few Moslem BaNgwana), and used to visit it to trade their meat for plantation products. This was where I first met them.

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* Patrick Putnam first went to the Belgian Congo in 1927 to do field work for Harvard University. Apart from one or two brief return visits to the United States he remained there until his death at the end of 1953. At Camp Putnam he established a dispensary and a leper colony, turning his home into a guest house to help pay the expenses of his hospital work.

But on my second visit, in 1954, I was provided with a real op- 114
portunity for studying the relationship between the Pygmies and 177
their village neighbors. The event was the decision of the local Negro 881
chief to hold a tribal nkumbi initiation festival. This is a festival in which all boys between the ages of about nine and twelve are circumcised, then set apart and kept in an initiation camp where they are taught the secrets of tribal lore, to emerge after two or three months with the privileges and responsibilities of adult status.

The nkumbi is a village custom, but in areas where the practice 177
prevails the Pygmies always send their children to be initiated along 881
with the Negro boys. This has been cited as an example of their dependence on the Negroes and of their lack of an indigenous culture. The Negroes take all the leading roles in the festival, and as no Pygmy belongs to the tribe, none can become a ritual specialist, so the Pygmy boys always have to depend on the Negroes for admission to an initiation, and for the subsequent instruction. An uninitiated male, Pygmy or Negro, young or old, is considered as a child—half a man at best.

Only relatives of the boys undergoing initiation are allowed to live in the camp, though any adult initiated male can visit the camp during the daytime.

But it so happened that on this occasion there were no Negro boys of the right age for initiation, so the only men who could live in the camp and stay there all night were Pygmies. To go against the custom of allowing just relatives to live in the camp would have brought death and disaster. Nevertheless the Negroes went ahead with the festival because it has to be held to avoid offending the tribal ancestors. The Negro men would have liked to stay in the camp all night, as normally instruction goes on even then, the boys being allowed to sleep only for short periods. But custom was too strong, and they had to rely on the Pygmy fathers to maintain order in the camp after dark and not allow the children to have too much sleep.

123 177 881 The Pygmies, however, did not feel bound by the custom, as it was not theirs anyway, and they invited me to stay with them, knowing perfectly well that I would bring with me plenty of tobacco, palm wine, and other luxuries. I was, after all, they said, father of all the children, so I was entitled to stay. The Negroes protested, but there was nothing they could do. On the one hand they felt that I would be punished for my offense by their supernatural sanctions; on the other they themselves hoped to profit by my presence. At least I could be expected to share in the expenses, which otherwise they would have to bear, of initiating the eight Pygmy boys.

And so I entered the camp and saw the initiation through from beginning to end. It was not a particularly comfortable time, as we got very little sleep. The Pygmy fathers were not in the least interested in staying awake simply to keep their children awake and teach them nonsensical songs, so the Negroes used to make periodic raids during the night, shouting and yelling and lashing out with [352] whips made of thorny branches, to wake everyone up. Besides that, the camp was not very well built and the heavy rains used to soak the ground we slept on; only the boys, sleeping on their rough bed made of split logs, were dry. In the end we all used to climb up there and sit—there was not room for everyone to lie down—cold and miserable, waiting for the dawn to bring another daily round of exhausting singing and dancing.

123 But at the end of it all I knew something about the Pygmies, and they knew something about me, and a bond had been made between us by all the discomforts we had shared together as well as by all the fun. And when the initiation was over and we were off in the forest I learned still more. It was then that I knew for sure that much of what had been written about the Pygmies to date gave just about as false a picture as did the thirteenth-century cartographer who painted them as one-legged troglodytes. 181 179 In the village, or in the presence of even a single Negro or European, the Pygmies behave

in one way. They are submissive, almost servile, and appear to have 181
no culture of their own. But at night in the initiation camp when 177
the last Negro had left, or off in the forest, those same Pygmies
were different people. They cast off one way of life and took on another, and from the little I saw of their forest life it was as full and satisfactory as village life seemed empty and meaningless.

The Pygmies are no more perfect than any other people, and life, 123
though kind to them, is not without hardships. But there was something 181
about the relationship between these simple, unaffected people
and their forest home that was captivating. And when the time
came that I had to leave, even though we were camped back near [533]
the village, the Pygmies gathered around their fire on the eve of my departure and sang their forest songs for me; and for the first time I heard the voice of the molimo. Then I was sure that I could never rest until I had come out again, free of any obligations to stay in the village, free of any limitations of time, free simply to live and roam the forest with the BaMbuti, its people; and free to let them teach me in their own time what it was that made their life so different from that of other people.

The evening before I left, before the singing started, three of 123
the great hunters took me off into the forest. They said they wanted 304
to be sure that I would come back again, so they thought they would
make me "of the forest." There was Njobo, the killer of elephants; [551]
his close friend and distant relative, Kolongo; and Moke, an elderly Pygmy who never raised his voice, and to whom everyone listened with respect. Kolongo held my head and Njobo casually took a rusty arrow blade and cut tiny but deep vertical slits in the center of my forehead and above each eye. He then gouged out a little flesh from each slit and asked Kolongo for the medicine to put in. But Kolongo had forgotten to bring it, so while I sat on a log, not feeling very bright, Kolongo ambled off to get the medicine, and Moke wandered around cheerfully humming to himself, looking for something to eat.

123 It began to rain, and Njobo decided that he was not going to stay
304 and get wet, so he left. Moke was on the point of doing the same
[152] when Kolongo returned. Obviously anxious to get the whole thing
over with as little ceremony as possible and return to his warm dry hut, he rubbed the black ash-paste hard into the cuts until it filled them and congealed the blood that still flowed. And there it is today, ash made from the plants of the forest, a part of the forest that is a part of the flesh, carried by every self-respecting Pygmy male. And as long as it is with me it will always call me back.

The women thought it a great joke when I finally got back to camp, wet and still rather shaky. They crowded around to have a
[152] look and burst into shrieks of laughter. They said that now I was a
[885] real man with the marks of a hunter, so I would have to get married
and then I would never be able to leave. Moke looked slyly at me. He had not explained that the marks had quite that significance.

123 It was later that evening when the men were singing that I heard
533 the molimo. By then I had learned to speak the language quite well,
534 and I had heard them discussing whether or not to bring the molimo
out; there was some opposition on the grounds that it was "a thing of the forest," and not of the village, but old Moke said it was good for me to hear it before I left, as it would surely not let me stay long away but would bring me safely back.

First I heard it call out of the night from the other side of the Nepussi River, where three years earlier I had helped Pat Putnam build a dam. The dam was still there, though breached by continuous flooding. The hospital where Pat had given his life lay just beyond, now an overgrown jungle, only a few crumbling vine-covered walls left standing, the rest lost in a wilderness of undergrowth. Somewhere over there, in the darkness, the molimo now called; it sounded like someone singing but it was not a human voice. It was a deep, gentle, lowing sound, sometimes breaking off into a quiet falsetto, sometimes growling like a leopard. As the men sang

their songs of praise to the forest, the molimo answered them, first 123
on this side, then on that, moving around so swiftly and silently 533
that it seemed to be everywhere at once. 534

Then, still unseen, it was right beside me, not more than two feet away, on the other side of a small but thick wall of leaves. As it replied to the song of the men, who continued to sing as though nothing were happening, the sound was sad and wistful, and immensely beautiful. Several of the older men were sitting near me, and one of them, without even looking up, asked me if I wanted to see the molimo. He then continued singing as though he didn't particularly care what my reply was, but I knew that he did. I was so overcome by curiosity that I almost said "yes"; I had been fighting hard to stop myself from trying to peer through the leaves to where it was now growling away almost angrily. But I knew that Pygmy youths were not allowed to see it until they had proved themselves as hunters, as adults in Pygmy eyes, and although I now carried the marks on my forehead I still felt unqualified. So I simply said, no, I did not think I was ready to see it.

The molimo gave a great burst of song and with a wild rush swept across the camp, surrounded by a dozen youths packed so tightly together that I could see nothing, and disappeared into the forest. Those left in the camp made no comment; they just kept on with their song, and after a while the voice of the molimo, replying to them, became fainter and fainter and was finally lost in the night and in the depths of the forest from where it had come.

This experience convinced me that here was something that I 123
could do that was really worth while, and that I was not doing it justice by coming armed with cameras and recording equipment, as I had on this trip. The Pygmies were more than curiosities to be filmed, and their music was more than a quaint sound to be put on

123 records. They were a people who had found in the forest something that made their life more than just worth living, something that made it, with all its hardships and problems and tragedies, a wonderful thing full of joy and happiness and free of care.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

2

The Good Death of Balekimito

After two years' further preparation at Oxford I felt ready to 121
return to the Ituri, to try and understand just what it was that made the People of the Forest what they were, what made them so very different from the villagers all around them, what made them seem to adopt village ways with such enthusiasm, only to abandon them with utter unconcern the moment they left the treeless confines of the village and returned to the forest.

If you land at Lomé, you drive first of all along the coast of Togo 000
and Dahomey, where the Atlantic surf pounds day and night on

000 the sands, beating right up to the first line of tall, waving palm trees. Then you climb gently inland to the rolling hills of Nigeria, lightly wooded in places, but for the most part open and fertile. When you cross into the Cameroons there is an abrupt change. You pass steeply up into a massive range of mountains, through a narrow but dense belt of forest~~, and~~ climb still higher until you are above tree line.

The road is appalling, covered with loose stones and boulders, with a gradient as much as one in four in places, deeply scoured with gulleys made by the heavy rains pouring off the mountainside. The road twists and turns until you lose all sense of direction, but at the top there is an open, flat stretch of grassland, and at the far side of that, in the French Cameroons, you find yourself faced with a descent as uncomfortable as the climb on the British side. But here, instead of looking down on rich farmland, open and sunny, you look out over a vast sea of dense, shimmering tree tops, so dark they are almost black. On all sides this ocean of forest stretches for as far as you can see, quiet and peaceful, asking only to be left undisturbed, or at least approached in peace. But the darkness also carries a threat, a warning to outsiders that they would do well to stay away. The same darkness welcomes those who understand, and there is no feeling quite the same as the refreshing coolness of the first shadows cast by the leafy giants at the forest edge, after years away from its shade and shelter.

131 From there on, the forest stretches east and south, silent and aloof,
133 for thousands of miles. To the west the Atlantic is only a short distance away; to the east the forest reaches all the way to the Mountains of the Moon. It is still with you when you cross the Ubangi Chari River, possessively covering the land right down to the water's edge. On the far side of that great river there is still another thousand miles before you reach the river Aruwimi, the wide and proud tributary of the even mightier Congo. After a few hundred miles the Aruwimi becomes less wide but more tempestuous and turbulent,

and its name changes to the Ituri. This is where the forest becomes 131
the home of the BaMbuti, all the way through to its easternmost 133
fringe, north as far as it is dense enough to cast its protective shade, and for unknown hundreds of miles to the south, where it is still unexplored. This was the home of the Pygmies thousands of years before Europeans thought of Africa itself as anything much more than a myth.

To be back was wonderful, but the changes at Camp Putnam 000
were so drastic that I wondered if I had done the right thing in returning. Now that Pat was dead the name of the district had been changed to Epulu, the name of the river that ran past his old home. And more than the name was changed. A few hundred yards on, past the turning to the old village of Camp Putnam, the road crossed the river by a rickety wooden bridge. The bridge was as rickety as ever, but the forest on either side had been cut down, and backing onto what had once been Pat's estate was an ugly modern motel, built by an enterprising Belgian who hoped to attract tourists. The main attraction was that on the other side of the road the government had established a *Station de Chasse* for the capture of forest animals, particularly okapi, and for the training of forest elephants. Between these two innovations down by the bridge and the old entrance to Camp Putnam stretched the mud houses of the workers, with a few tiny African stores and an establishment proudly calling itself Hotel de Bière. The village of Camp Putnam remained unaltered. Even the old mud mansion still stood.

Not only the changed appearance of Epulu was *disconcerting:* 177
so was the fact that this new community was attracting Pygmy labor, 464
particularly since Pygmies could be paid even less than other tribes. I found that several of my old friends were working either at the Animal Station or the motel, buying their food with money at the local stores, instead of freely roaming the forest hunting and gathering for their needs. One of them, a youth called Kenge, had

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

115 177 One of them, a youth called Kenge, had even become bugler at the Animal Station, where almost every hour the air was shattered with attempts at military bugle calls.

464 [551] Kenge's father had died a number of years ago, when he was just a boy. His mother had returned to her village, but Kenge had stayed around Camp Putnam. Pat Putnam encouraged him to become a jack-of-all-trades, and Kenge had come to spend more time at the camp than in the forest. He even learned the work of hotel boy, such as pressing clothes for Putnam's guests. He wore shorts and shirt, meticulously scrubbed and pressed with the Camp Putnam flatiron, but usually without buttons. He was very sophisticated and a little conceited, but a good friend to me at all times, and eventually he made himself indispensable.

115 123 During my last trip Kenge had been with me practically the whole time; since no women were allowed in the initiation camp, he helped with the cooking, and he had told me how to behave. He tried to interpret my questions to the others, for he had a better idea than most Pygmies of the peculiar sorts of things that Europeans want to know. Such things to an African are often forbidden topics of conversation and even to mention them would be grossly indiscreet or even insulting. Kenge became so familiar with the kind of questions I liked to ask that he would even conduct inquiries in my absence, then tell me what he had discovered about so-and-so's mother's brother's daughter. But for all his sophistication, what he liked best was to take me through the forest, as though he owned it personally, showing it to me with infinite pride.

He had insisted on working for me, and I had fired him regularly every two or three weeks, because, sophisticated or not, he was as unpredictable as any Pygmy, and just as disinclined to do anything he did not want to do. Several times he announced that he was going to get food for my supper, and I would give him the money to buy something special in the village. Of course he would go straight to the beer house and leave me to scrounge what I could. I soon learned to raid the Negro plantations myself, and to cut the huge banana 115 leaves on which we used to sleep every night. On such occasions 123 Kenge would return late, when he thought I was asleep, lie down beside me, and very soon begin to work the blanket off my back until he was comfortably covered. If I objected, he merely muttered something that I couldn't understand but that brought titters of laughter from all the other Pygmies lying around the fire.

When I told him he was fired, he took it as permission to take two or three days' holiday. Then one morning I would wake up to find a neatly dressed and unrepentant Kenge squatting over a smoky fire concocting an especially elaborate breakfast for the two of us. In the middle of eating breakfast, without asking me if I had had enough, he would often take the dish and pass it with a grand air to the other unmarried youths sitting hungrily around. If I protested he would simply tell me that I had eaten enough. If I said that I couldn't afford to feed all the bachelors in the camp, he would ask me how much my Leica camera had cost. Since it cost me four hundred dollars, and for four hundred dollars I could live in the Congo for four hundred weeks, there was no effective answer. Kenge knew it, and besides, he was on his own territory. I was a mere intruder.

So when I heard that Kenge had become chief bugler for the Animal Station I was both relieved and sad. I knew I had been saved a lot of headaches, but Kenge was worth them all, and more. I began to look around for someone else who could take his place. Then one morning, just a few days after I had arrived, I woke up, and there he was, a well-groomed Pygmy in buttonless shorts and shirt, a cup of coffee balanced expertly in one hand. I asked him about his bugling, and he said he was tired of having to get up so early every morning, and anyway it hurt his lips. He announced that he was going to work for me again. I told him I could not afford to pay him much, as I wanted to stay a long time and had to make my money last. Kenge looked at me in the frank, open-eyed way of the real

115 123 Pygmy and said he didn't mind. He suggested 40 francs per week, a wage considerably below what he had been earning as a bugler. He said that if I could afford a present when I left, that would be fine. Pygmies have a way of letting you know when they really mean what they say, and this was one of those times. In all the many months that followed, Kenge never once asked me for money, beyond his meager salary. And once when I was short of cash and we were down in the village he spent his own savings to buy food for the two of us.

123 In the course of my two previous trips I had come to know most of the Pygmies in this area quite well, and the initiation had cemented our friendship, though at the best I suspect they regarded me merely as a rather harmless outsider. I was soon brought up to date on all 177 [464] [434] that happened during the past three years. Kenge said that the hunting group was still hunting and gathering, but that they sometimes came down to the village and spent time there, earning money at the Station de Chasse or at the motel, money which they promptly spent on food, tobacco, and palm wine at the new stores. They still brought in meat for their *BaKpara*, or "masters," and took plantation 177 241 foods in return. But, encouraged by the administration, they had begun to make their own plantation in the forest. This was the worst possible news; once the Pygmies have plantations their hunting-and-gathering existence is made impossible. They become tied to one place and do not have time to follow the game.

241 156 [551] [224] The two busiest workers on the plantation and those who had the finest clearings were Njobo and Masisi. They were two of the most influential hunters of the group. Njobo had killed two elephants single-handed, and two more in company with other Pygmies. He had three wives, but had only one child, a son by his second wife. The son, Nyange, had been a healthy lad when I had last seen him, but now he was crippled with tuberculosis of the leg bone.

156 Masisi was a relative of Njobo's, and though not such a renowned

P 156
hunter he was blessed with a large family. He had a powerful and penetrating voice, took an active part in any dispute, and usually P [152] managed to shout his opponents down, which is one of the chief [578] ways the Pygmies have of settling a dispute. His family were all P [142] strikingly fine-looking, with almost Greek-like appearance although of normal Pygmy stature—under four and a half feet.

Most Pygmies have unmistakable features, other than height, P 142 that set them apart from the Negroes. Their legs are short in proportion to their bodies; they are powerful, muscular, and usually splay-backed; their heads are round and the eyes are set wide apart; they have flat noses almost as broad as their mouths are long. The head hair grows in peppercorn tufts, and the body hair varies from one extreme to the other—some Pygmies are covered thickly from head to foot. Another characteristic is the alert expression of the face, direct and P 157 unafraid, as keen as the body, which is always ready to move with speed and agility at a moment's notice. All these traits are uncharacteristic of the Negro tribes that live in the forest around the Pygmies. C [157] These tribes are a rather shifty, lazy lot who survived the ravages of Tippu Tip's slave-traders by treachery and deceit. In the villages you will sometimes find Pygmies who are like this too, but they are scorned by the BaMbuti who have remained in the forest and have refused to be settled.

P 156
Masisi's children had finer features, with longer faces and straight noses, and they were slimmer and less stocky. His eldest son, Ageronga, P [142] was a fine hunter and often used to take his father's place.

Another member of the same clan, a cousin of Masisi's, was Manyalibo. P [551] A traditionalist, he was older than Masisi, and the son of an elder brother of Masisi's father, yet he had less say in everyday matters because he was not such an active hunter. Nor did he have such a fine family. He had two daughters of his own, but no sons, and although he had adopted a distant nephew, Madyadya, the boy was proving a great trial, having been spoiled by everyone, as orphans

156 usually are. Both Manyalibo and his wife were great humorists, and
[522] they made use of the powers of ridicule to break up some of the
[626] more serious disputes, because there is nothing that upsets a Pygmy more than being laughed at.

[551] The oldest member of the group, a member of the same family though even more distantly related, was old Tungana, who had so many children and grandchildren that neither he nor his wife could
156 remember all their names. Strangely enough, he was a progressive
177 Pygmy, and whereas Manyalibo was constantly decrying the Pygmy
888 plantation in his deep bass voice, Tungana thought it was fine. He also thought living near the village was a good thing as there was so much good food to be had for the stealing. And wasn't stealing easier than hunting? I think the truth was that poor old Tungana was getting too old to follow the hunting band with ease, and he was afraid of being abandoned. In fact, he often remained behind in the village when the rest were far off in the forest, and one of his many sons would come in every few days bringing the old couple gifts of meat and forest fruits.

[551] Moke was another of the elders. He claimed a fictional relation-
[608] ship with Tungana because it made him feel at home, since he had no real relatives in the group other than his own children. Moke was the greatest traditionalist of all, and when the Pygmy plantations were mentioned in front of him he just laughed dryly to himself and smiled his toothless smile, saying he had not tasted any Pygmy bananas yet, but if any grew then he would be glad to eat them.
156 It was Moke who had come with Kolongo and Njobo to cut the marks on my forehead three years earlier. Kolongo had been as much of a traditionalist as Moke, as indeed were all his family, particularly the wizened old mother, Balekimito, and his oldest sister, Asofalinda, who was now a widow and thoroughly enjoying her freedom. Moke had thought of her as a companion for his old age, but Asofalinda liked life as it was, so Moke was still a widower and she a widow.

THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

156
About a year after I had left the last time, Kolongo had been killed
by a crocodile, and his mother had been so upset she had left the
group and her entire family, and gone back to her old village. Her
other son, Ekianga, remained as head of the family. It was a different
clan but related by marriage to Njobo and Masisi and Manyalibo.

Ekianga was anything but a traditionalist in some ways, though
in others he was as conservative as the rest of his relatives. His most [595]
untraditional act was to have three wives. He was a very great hunter,
and as vain as could be, and he liked imitating the ways of the outside
world, where it is a sign of wealth to have many wives. The
Pygmies say that one is enough to manage, and judging by Ekianga's
constant domestic difficulties they are right. He was hairy, broad-chested,
and powerful almost to the point of ugliness, and from
somewhere he had learned how to put on a perfect toothpaste smile.
He always built his huts a different shape from everyone else's, [342]
and in the Pygmy camp near the village his house was the biggest
and the smartest of them all, sheltering his entire ménage.

His youngest wife was a beautiful girl called Kamaikan. She was [142]
even lighter than most Pygmies, yellowish-brown, instead of the
more usual coffee-brown. Her brother and mother also lived with the 156
same hunting group, and there was constant friction, for on marrying 596
her Ekianga had given a "sister"—actually a fairly distant relative— 583
to her brother, Amabosu, in exchange. This exchange is made with 578
the full consent of all parties, but none the less it leads to a division
of loyalties, and Amabosu was a very temperamental Pygmy. He was 156
a fine hunter, but he was particularly renowned as the best singer
and best drummer and best dancer in the area; for these qualities
alone his prestige was enormous. His skinny old mother, Sau, was 156
not without fame of her own. Old and infirm people, amongst the 888
Pygmies, are regarded, not exactly with suspicion or mistrust, but
with apprehension. In a vigorous community of this kind where
mobility is essential, cripples and infirm people can be a great handi-

156 888 cap and may even endanger the safety of the group. Hence there are numerous legends of old people's being left to die if they cannot keep up with the group as it moves from camp to camp. Like old Tungana, Sau knew this, and although she was still healthy she made sure everyone knew it by taking the most vigorous and unexpected part in any dispute, her sharp acid voice betraying a certain bitterness at the way she was treated. For not only was Sau old, she was also almost alone, with only her son and daughter near her, while everyone else had brothers, sisters, cousins, parents, children and grandchildren.

[754] The Negroes said that Sau was a witch and should be killed or driven away. I used to look at her, squatting over the fire outside her hut, knees hunched up to her chin, staring silently into the middle of the camp. She certainly seemed sinister, as she gazed without blinking, taking in everything that was going on, not moving hour after hour. Her son Amabosu, the great singer, had those same staring eyes, and at times looked even more like a witch than his mother did. This family nearly always built their hut next to mine, and I came to be very fond of them. [123]

621 578 [583] If these names are confusing to the reader, they at least help to give a picture of the apparent confusion created in any Pygmy camp by the complicated network of intermarriage and sister-exchange. Essentially a camp is a happy-go-lucky, friendly place, but it is also full of all sorts of little tensions that can suddenly become magnified out of all proportion and lead to full-scale disputes.

621 This particular group was a rather large one, consisting of the two main families—that of Njobo and Masisi, Tungana and Manyalibo; and that of Ekianga and his relatives, including Sau and Amabosu. But to add to the tensions there was a third group which was constantly trying to attach itself. It was intermarried heavily with the other two, as often happens in an attempt to strengthen bonds and establish an unbreakable relationship.

THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

The leader of this group—although with Pygmies it is always unwise 156
to talk of single "leaders"—was a wily but rather naïve Pygmy 624
by the name of Cephu. Most Pygmies use their real names among 551
themselves, but they all have additional names, in KiNgwana, by
which they are known to the Negroes. Cephu always used his
KiNgwana name, pronounced just slightly differently from the Negro
equivalent, Sefu. No matter what language they are speaking, the [194]
Pygmies always retain their own peculiar intonation, which renders
the language almost incomprehensible to non-Pygmies.

Cephu's family was large, but not large enough, even with all his 156
in-laws, to form a hunting group of his own. To do this you have 571
to have at the very least six or seven individual families, each with 621
its own hunting net; only in this way can you have an efficient net-hunt,
with the women and children driving the animals into the long
circle of nets, joined end to end. Cephu's group was usually not more
than four families, and so he tacked himself onto Njobo and Ekianga.
Sometimes this worked out well enough, as Pygmies are great people [574]
for visiting their relatives, and one or the other group might be
depleted by absences. But at other times they would have a number
of families visiting them, and then the addition of Cephu and all his
relatives made the whole group far too large and unwieldy. But as he
had taken the precaution of exchanging sisters, he could not be
refused, and so he would make his own little camp close by connected
by a narrow trail. He would follow the others whenever they went
hunting and was invariably blamed when the hunt was not a success.
At night he and his family kept to themselves, seldom venturing
into the main camp. They sat around their own fire, offended, aloof,
and rather unhappy, but with hides as tough as that of a forest buffalo
and impervious to the most obvious hints and thinly veiled insults.
But Cephu was the best storyteller in the forest. [538]

Kenge's position in the group was an undefined and rather happy 115
one. His father had married a sister of Njobo and joined his wife's 602

115 group, as often happens. But Kenge was his son by another wife,
602 from a totally unrelated group. By Njobo's sister his father had one
daughter, and she was Kenge's only real blood relative in the whole
[832] group. This was important, as it enabled him to flirt with almost
any of the other girls, with the added spice of its being thought
incestuous, because they belonged to his group even though they
were totally unrelated.

361 Since I had been with them before, the group had changed
177 slightly, with a few additions and subtractions. At their suggestion
[123] I decided to build my own house in their village camp. It looked as
[122] if we were in for a long spell in the village. The camp was in a
strategic position between the village of the workers of the motel
and Station de Chasse and that of Camp Putnam, near the stores
and the beer house, and—even more important—near all the surrounding
plantations. Progressive old Tungana said that it was a
good site because tourists could drive close by and take their photographs
and give them money. Manyalibo, in his dry way, said the
only good thing about it was that it was close to the plantations so
he didn't have to go far to steal his food. The youngsters liked it
because it was near the houses of Negro villagers, where they could
go begging for cigarettes, old clothes, and palm wine.

177 It looked, in fact, as if these Pygmies had become as professional
as those that line the roadside at Beni, on the edge of the forest, selling
their services to tourists, letting themselves be photographed
doing things they would never do in the forest, wearing clothes they
wouldn't wear except in a village, even selling the tourist weapons
177 used only by Negroes. But Moke reassured me. His face wrinkled
166 up in smiles, and in his soft, toothless voice he told me not to worry,
that we would all be back in the forest long before my house was
[829] finished. "That is where we belong," he said, "and we shall return
soon. We cannot refuse the forest." He was right, but it was in

circumstances he could not have foreseen or he would not have been 122
so cheerful.

For the first few days I went out with Kenge and others to the 313
new "Pygmy plantation," to collect the poles and saplings for my [123]
house. The plantation was a chaotic tangle of fallen, broken, splintered wood. The Pygmies, armed only with their small honey axes, [412]
and a few bigger blades borrowed or stolen from the Negroes, had chopped the smaller trees down at about shoulder height, or rather less. The bigger trees they had attacked higher up, working from a flimsy frame from which they gnawed with their tiny hatchets like rats until a hundred and fifty feet of timber came crashing down. They had evidently caught on to the idea that if they attacked the big trees first, those, as they fell, would bring down a number of smaller ones, saving that much work. The result was that even they found it difficult to pick their way among the debris, and they had no means of clearing it. None the less, they had hopefully thrown 313
down banana stems here and there, hoping for them to take root. 245
Njobo proudly showed me one he had "planted," which was struggling manfully to raise its withered leaves above the debris into the sunshine. The only clearing had been done by Negroes, like myself in search of building materials. Evidently the Pygmies' enthusiasm for their plantation had not carried them very far.

The building of my house followed much the same pattern that 342
characterizes every Pygmy endeavor outside the forest world. It began with a lot of noise and big ideas. Their own camp was built in the [361] [301]
manner of a Negro village, mud huts in two lines facing each other. The huts were only about seven feet long and five feet deep, some without roofs, some without walls, none of them really complete. Larger families joined two houses together. Only Ekianga's was dif- 342
ferent, as might be expected. His house stood at the far end and ran 184
across between the two lines, facing down the middle. It was about twenty feet long and had a fine wooden door that opened and

342 closed on hinges. The only other hut to have a door was that of
[184] Njobo, which was at the opposite end and also faced down the mid-
dle, but not quite so blatantly as Ekianga's. The rest had leaf-
covered frames which were simply pulled across the opening to close
it.

342 My house was built opposite Njobo's, with the old witch Sau
123 and her son Amabosu to my right. At first the Pygmies were going
122 to build me the biggest house ever built in the forest—bigger than
Camp Putnam. We finally compromised and when the framework
of interlaced saplings was finished I had two rooms, each about ten
[476] feet square. Even so, I knew it would never be finished, for by then
the number of workers was dropping off rapidly; so I suggested
mudding the walls of only one room, but leafing the whole roof
so that our "village" would have a veranda. This was thought to be
a fine idea.

761 One day I was on my way out to the plantation with Kenge,
763 Manyalibo and Moke, when on the way we met Cephu's handsome
152 nephew, Kelemoke, a very light-skinned youth who had two chil-
dren even lighter than he. He was wailing and crying, and told us
that Cephu's daughter, only a few years old, had just died. He then
761 continued on his way, wailing loudly. I expected the others to turn
763 back, but they continued as though nothing had happened. Kenge
152 made some remark about Cephu's virility and the others snorted with
522 laughter. Kenge had the charming habit of laughing at his own
jokes, which seemed funnier to him the more he thought about them,
so he was still clapping his side and doubling up and shouting to the
forest what a funny joke it was when we reached the plantation.
763 Then he stopped. Although we could see nobody, Moke called out
761 quietly that Cephu's daughter had died, and Njobo and Masisi and
152 a few others appeared from where they had been "working," looking
[765] rather cross at being disturbed. Njobo said it was a nuisance. The
girl was his wife's niece, and this meant that his wife would keep

him awake with her wailing and would probably forget to cook for 763 761
him. He set off at once for the village, grumbling, and Moke went 152
with him. Masisi started one of his loud tirades, saying in his sharp [765]
voice that Cephu never looked after his children properly, so it was
no wonder they died. This must have reminded Kenge of his joke, [522]
because he started laughing again, or perhaps he was laughing at
Masisi, but Masisi got angrier than ever and said he was going
straight to the village to tell Cephu what he thought of him. He
stamped angrily after Njobo and Moke, still shouting deprecating
remarks about the bereaved father.

Kenge laughed happily and said that there was going to be a
dreadful noise when Masisi got back to the village, so we would
do better to stay where we were until it was all over. Manyalibo, who [222]
had not said a word, suggested looking for *itaba*, a sweet edible root,
and with food our foremost thought we set off.

When we got back to the village in the late afternoon we found
everyone sitting around outside their little houses, staring gloomily
at nothing in particular. Masisi was still talking loudly, pointing at
the sky and over in the direction of Cephu's camp, from which I
could hear women wailing, and saying that it was a shame that
Cephu should let his children die and cause everyone so much trouble.
Tungana mournfully said that he didn't like funerals; the [764]
Negroes made so much noise at them. Masisi's younger brother, [589]
Mambunia, still a bachelor because one of his legs was crippled with [732]
paralysis and he was not able to hunt well enough to support a
family, added in shrill falsetto that Cephu was so inconsiderate and
such a trouble-maker that he would probably let his daughter die
completely—completely and absolutely.

I did not understand what he meant at first, but it provoked an 763
immediate response from Asofalinda, Ekianga's widowed sister. She 761
strode across the camp, marching with long swinging strides to 152
where Mambunia was sitting, his paralyzed leg stuck out in front 578

763

761 152 578 of him. She pointed her skinny hand at him, flinging her arm backward and forward with every step, rhythmically enumerating all the reasons why he should keep his mouth shut. He was a great one at complaining about other people being trouble-makers, but he made more noise than anyone. Besides, one should never say that anyone had died completely unless they had died for ever.

Madyadya, Manyalibo's adopted son, lazily wandered in between them and spitting on the ground said that Asofalinda made a pretty good noise herself. Old Moke laughed noiselessly. Asofalinda strode back to her house and slammed the fine wooden door; Mambunia continued to grumble to himself for a few minutes, and Masisi asked who was going to give him some tobacco.

761 763 158 It seemed that the girl was very ill with dysentery but was not yet dead. The Pygmies express various degrees of illness by saying that someone is hot, with fever, ill, dead, completely or absolutely dead, and, finally, dead for ever.

763 152 Unhappily, early the next morning loud wailing from Cephu's camp, a quarter of a mile away, told us that the little girl was now dead for ever. When someone is ill the women relatives will wail, but it is a formal act, perhaps copied from the Negroes for whom it is an obligation. But when someone really dies, for ever, there is among the Pygmies a burst of uncontrollable grief, not only from relatives, but from friends. Even men will weep if they have been close to the dead person. It is a very different sound, and a terrible one, and that is what we heard shortly after dawn.

764 [123] [177] The funeral took place the same day, directed by the Negroes. I helped with the digging of the grave, but Kenge, Kelemoke, Amabosu, and Masisi's eldest son Ageronga were the chief diggers. The Negroes lent the tools and stood there, giving instructions, and they became impatient and angry when we stopped and climbed out of the grave for a smoke. The young Pygmies laughed and joked, and

Kelemoke, although he was a close relative of the girl's, was in par- P 764
ticularly good humor.

Meanwhile the body had been bathed, scented, wrapped in a P 764 177
white cloth, tied up in a mat and placed on a rough wooden bier. This was strictly according to Negro custom. In the forest the Pygmies would have been unable to get the soap and scent and cloth, for one thing, and would not have had the tools to dig an elaborate grave, for another. The bier was brought to the graveyard, which lay behind the village, in a noisy, wailing procession of Pygmies and Negroes. The body was carefully lowered into the grave. Rather grotesquely they made sure which end was which by grasping the head and twisting it under its covering. The body was oriented, laid on its side in a niche that had been cut under one wall of the grave, and held in place with three stones. Sticks were placed at an angle over it, and these were covered with leaves, then with moist earth, so that no soil should fall on the body. Then the grave was filled, some people throwing in a handful of earth, others just standing and watching. The mother and older sister tried to throw themselves into the half-filled grave and had to be dragged away. Cephu was C
weeping so bitterly that he had to be supported. Among the Negroes 764
there is a strict ruling about funeral protocol—who is allowed to 152
wail and who is not, who is allowed to support the chief mourner, a purely formal gesture, and so on. But this funeral followed no such rules. Whenever it made no difference to them the Pygmies followed the Negro custom, but the moment they wanted to go their own way they did.

Before the grave was completely covered the women left. The P 764
Negroes directed the operation of guiding the spirit safely away by 177
pouring a bucket of water, first into a hole left in the earth above C
the head of the corpse, then down the grave and off in the direction 764
of the forest, away from the village. To the Negroes the forest is 775
the place for spirits of the dead; they must be kept away from the village at all costs.

000 village at all costs. Rather to my surprise this struck the Pygmies as
P
764 being funny, and they began sniggering. Kenge, carefully dusting
177 the last specks of earth from his spotless shorts, pretended to be
522 severe and said this was no time for laughter. He then promptly
cracked a joke at the expense of the Negroes and joined his friends
P in howls of mirth. When Pygmies laugh it is hard not to be af-
[201] fected; they hold onto one another as if for support, slap their sides,
snap their fingers, and go through all manner of physical contortions.
If something strikes them as particularly funny they will even roll on
the ground, but this time the disapproving looks they got from the
Negroes discouraged them.

C The Negroes, having restored order, went on to the business of
761 settling who was responsible for the death of the child. To them no
764 death is natural; some evil spirit, some witch or sorcerer, had cursed
the girl with dysentery and made her die. They tried to find out
who had been fighting in Cephu's camp, who were the enemies of
the girl's family. Their concern was a real one, for if the witch was
P not found, it might strike at them next. But the Pygmies were not
[761] co-operative. They were bored and listless. The girl had died and
[179] that was that. The Negroes finally gave up and we all returned,
washing from head to foot as we crossed over the Nepussi.

P Back in the main camp everything was normal. Only in Cephu's
765 little camp was there quiet, subdued wailing from the house of the
child's parents. There was some discussion as to whether or not the
molimo should be called out. Cephu said in an aggressive manner
that it should be, the only trouble being that he didn't have one.
Certain families own them; others do not but when in need can
borrow them from relatives. Cephu promptly called on Njobo, who
reluctantly agreed.

That night, after the evening meal, a small number of men from the main camp went over to Cephu's camp and sat down around the central fire. The women and children were in their huts; some talking, some sleeping, some sobbing softly. The men started singing, 765 and after a while I heard their song echoed from far off in the forest and recognized the wistful sound, hollow and ghostly, answering the men with snatches of their own song, sometimes singing its own variations, sometimes breaking off into low, growling, animal noises. The men continued singing as though nothing were happening, and I heard the molimo coming closer, circling around the camp. The women were all quiet in their huts now, and the fire had burned low; the camp was pitch dark except for an occasional glow where the ashes of some family hearth still glowed faintly outside a hut. Even near a village, Cephu never built huts in imitation of the [342] Negroes, and his camp was a typical forest camp, a close little circle [177] of small conical huts, made of a framework of saplings covered entirely [361] with leaves.

The molimo was silent for a few minutes and I looked at the faces of the men around our fire, which was flickering faintly in the middle of the camp. They were all staring at the flames, their eyes wide open but seeing things I had never seen. Only Cephu was lying back in his chair, and he seemed to be asleep. There was a slight movement beside me and I heard the molimo almost in my ear. The 765 sound was gentler and a little sad; it was now singing closely with 534 the men, as if answering their song. 533 Amabosu had joined the group and was on my left, and I saw that he had his hands up to his mouth. Then in the shadows I saw that he was singing into what looked like a long length of bamboo, a sort of trumpet, which was producing that eerie, hollow sound. After a few minutes he stood up. One of Tungana's sons also stood up, and I could see that he was holding the other end of the trumpet. The two danced around the fire, waving the bamboo tube over the flames, Amabosu singing into it all the time and the men's chorus growing louder and louder. Then the two performers dashed suddenly away into the forest behind the camp, and after a few leopardlike growls the trumpet was heard no

765 more. The men continued singing for about another hour, but as
533 by then Cephu and the rest of his family had gone inside their huts,
[534] they stopped abruptly and returned to the main camp.

The next evening the singing was around a fire in the middle of the main camp. After all, the molimo was Njobo's, and Cephu just went to sleep, so why should we go to his camp? A few men from Cephu's family came over, but not Cephu. The singing went on for about four hours, but the molimo did not appear again. The third night it was the same, except that nobody turned up from Cephu's camp.

[858] I thought this a little strange and asked Möke about it. He said that normally one would not call out the molimo for a child; that was why nobody was really enthusiastic, but Cephu had insisted. Besides, the molimo should only be in the forest, not so close to a Negro village. It was all right to sing molimo songs as long as there were no Negroes about, but even then it was not good to sing them
[774] near a village. The molimo itself, however, should come out only in the forest, where it belonged, and there was a lot of work attached, as it had to be given food to eat, water to drink, and fire to keep it warm. He stopped there and could not be persuaded to go any further. He just waved his hands in the air and said emphatically that this molimo was empty, meaningless, a farce.

765 At the end of a week the mourning period prescribed by the Ne-
177 groes was over; the women, who were meant to wail at sunrise, noon
186 and sunset, stopped wailing. A relative of Cephu's Negro "master" had come over to the village the night before, and the men had had a final burst of singing for him, but with their tongues in their cheeks. Moke told me not to think that this was a real molimo; it was what they did for the villagers to make them think their molimo was the same as the Pygmies'. The villagers also make use of a musical instrument called the *molimo*, but it is meant to represent the

voice of the clan totem, and it makes only animal sounds—it does not sing. 765 177 186

To end the period of mourning there had to be a feast, a great deal of the food being supplied by the Bantu. I felt that this was really why the Pygmies went through with the Negro funeral ceremony. Everyone was in high spirits. Even Cephu and his group joined the festivities, glad that there was no longer any need for the women to wail, constantly reminding them of a death they would rather forget. It is better to forget the dead quickly, the Pygmies [761] said, instead of making yourself remember them all the time, as the villagers do. When referring to the Bantu in this way, disparaging them or their customs, they used one of two terms, one meaning "animal," the other "savage"; the Negroes used the same terms about the Pygmies, and there was no great feeling of mutual respect.

At the height of the festivity there was a sudden cry from the 763 roadside, swelling into a burst of wailing that was infinitely more terrible than anything I had heard before. It was certainly worse than when Cephu's poor little girl had died for ever. Then old Balekimito, the much-loved mother of Ekianga and his dead brother Kolongo and of starchy old Asofalinda, was carried into the camp. She had been ill for some time, but as she was an old woman nobody had thought much of it. She had been ill before and not died completely, not even just died. But now she had died completely and absolutely, and her great hulking son, the great hunter, the man of substance with three wives, hairy, ugly Ekianga, was running up and down, his face streaked with tears, beating himself on the head with his fists and crying that his mother was going to die for ever.

Balekimito was carried gently over to her son's house, through the wooden door, and laid on the floor just inside. I went in to see her. The poor old woman was so thin I could see every bone in her weak, tired body; yet when I had last seen her she had been fine, upright, strong, and a powerful old matriarch if ever there was one.

763 She looked up at me with eyes that already had a bluish film over them and caught hold of my hand. She said she wanted to die near her son and was glad to be back again. She agreed to take some white [157] man's medicine, and the dispenser from the Station de Chasse was [177] sent for. This was quite a departure, as this family had always resisted more strongly than any the use of modern medicine.

Ekianga was almost beside himself. Gray-haired Asofalinda, no longer stiff and rough, but full of kindness, tried to comfort her younger brother, but she was too full of grief herself. She knelt on the ground beside her mother and wept. The old lady was the only one who seemed fully in control of herself, though the room was filled with wailing men, women and children. When the dispenser came she flickered to life with a burst of her old flame and slapped feebly at him with a bony hand as he pulled gently at her bark cloth to give her an injection, telling him to mind what he was doing. I felt her wince as the needle went in, but she continued looking up and smiling her old sweet smile. She was among her relatives and her friends, and that was all she wanted; she knew the injection would do no good. She held onto me so tightly that I couldn't leave until she finally dozed off; then when her grasp relaxed I quietly left and went out into the sunlight. Everyone was sitting around morosely, almost angrily. Even the little children, whom I had seen playing contentedly through other funerals, were quiet, holding onto their mothers in a frightened way. Everyone was watching Ekianga's fine wooden door, waiting for the end, waiting for old Balekimito to die for ever.

It was only a matter of hours. She never woke up.

The demonstration of grief that followed was no mere formal expression ordained by custom; it was something very real and disturbing. I have seen death in a Negro village where the atmosphere was one of fear—fear of sorcery, of the power of evil that had been unleashed. Here it was quite different. It was not a feeling of

fear, but a recognition of the completeness of a loss that could never 763
be made good. There was a finality and terrible emptiness in old Balekimito's death which could not be answered, for which there was no explanation, not even through sorcery or witchcraft. For the moment it seemed that the Pygmies, faced with the death of an old and well-loved and respected person such as this old lady, had nothing to cling to, and I was genuinely afraid that some of them would come to harm. Young and old alike crowded around the house, trying to force their way to Balekimito's deathbed. They were even fighting to get in, and once inside they fought to get out. At one point several children came flying out in a frenzy and threw themselves onto the ground, beating it with their arms and legs, kicking and biting at anyone who tried to comfort them. Inside, the commotion was even [762]
worse—Asofalinda, looking almost as old as her dead mother, had put a noose around her neck and seemed to be trying to strangle herself, full of remorse at having let her mother die. It took three men to take the noose from her neck, and when they finally tore it from her she ran outside and collapsed on the ground, sobbing her heart out.

Even Moke quietly forced his way into the death room and stayed there for a few minutes, saying nothing, making no sound, while tears rolled down his wrinkled face. Then he went out again and helped Asofalinda into the shade. Only Tungana and his wife, Bonyo, remained where they were, outside their hut a few yards away. They were too old for the exertion, and they just sat and cried to themselves, unashamed.

I went to my half-finished veranda to get out of the sun and found Kenge and a number of youths sitting around a fire. No [372]
matter how hot it is, there always has to be a fire. After a while the 763
rest of the men joined us and sat silently, as though waiting. Then 761
Moke came into the middle of the veranda and started talking, very softly and quietly, so that it was difficult to hear him at all. The

763 atmosphere was so tense I wondered if there was at last going to be
761 a real accusation of witchcraft, though from what I had seen the
Pygmies had no great belief in such things. But Moke's first words
put me at ease. Choking back a little sob, he managed to say in a
matter-of-fact way, "She died well."

There was a general nodding of heads. Manyalibo, who was a
nephew of Balekimito's, said in his gruff way that everyone should
be happy that she had lived so long, happy that she had died so well,
and that all this wailing should stop at once. He added that the
death was a "big thing," and that it was a "matter for the forest."
[765] There was a silence, and, looking around to make sure that there
were no women about, Manyalibo announced, "I shall call out my
molimo, and we will feast not for a week but for a month, or two
months, or even three; we shall feast the molimo and make the
forest happy."

763 Njobo, the great elephant hunter, had the final say. He stirred
[556] the fire idly with a stick, sending showers of sparks and ashes up
[829] into the warm air. "We have been in the village too long," he said.
[186] "We should have gone back to the forest before; that is where we
[168] belong. Now we must go back, far away from the village and from
the people of the village. It is a bad place."

He said that a few would stay behind to finish the work on my house, but that the rest of us should gather together all the food we could and be ready to move within a couple of days. The next day we would put Balekimito in the ground, and maybe the day after that we would leave.

At this everyone cheered up visibly and began criticizing the
women and children who were still pouring in and out of Ekianga's
[152] house, beating themselves and crying. Masisi said crossly that they
[828] would never behave this way if they were in the forest, and as he
talked he raised his voice until he worked himself into a real temper.
He stalked out of the veranda and down to the far end of the little

village, brandishing one hand above his head, telling everyone to 763
stop making such a dreadful noise, that it was not doing any good
to anybody. "Crying is a matter for the immediate family," he said. [152]
"She was a mother to us all, but for all of us to cry is just too much
noise." He clutched his head to illustrate the point, then grabbed a
couple of children, one of them his own, and sent them flying. By
now his temper was no longer artificial, and the women decided it
was wiser to keep out of his way, and left.

As soon as the wailing stopped and the door to Ekianga's house
was closed, with only the family inside, the cloud of depression lifted.
Everyone started talking about the imminent return to the forest— [166]
about where they would go to hunt, where they would go for mushrooms and for fruit and nuts and honey, and where they should
make their first camp. All agreed that it should be far away—but
not so far that old Tungana could not come.

That night there was a little wailing from Ekianga's house, and a few women both in the main camp and in Cephu's camp were crying to themselves. Every now and then Masisi's sharp voice was raised, telling them all to go to sleep.

The funeral took place the following morning, again conducted 765
by the Negroes. Balekimito was buried next to Cephu's daughter, 177
and once again, when the grave had been filled in and the women [764]
had left, the Negroes tried to conduct a council to discover who had
been responsible for the death. But the Pygmies were in no mood to
play games. They simply walked off after the women, washed themselves perfunctorily in the Nepussi and returned to the camp to start
preparations for going back to the forest.

After all, if Balekimito had died she had died well, and there
was a lot to do—plantations to raid and food to steal. This was no [186]
time to fool around with Negro notions of witchcraft and sorcery;
this was a time to get back to the forest as quickly as possible and
to hold the biggest molimo festival the forest had ever seen, to make
the forest happy again.

3

The Making of Camp Lelo

484 WHEN KENGE WOKE ME the sun was not yet up, and the birds were still silent in the trees. It was three days after Balekimito's funeral, and the previous night it had been decided in a general discussion that we should all leave early in the morning and build a camp at the Lelo River, several hours' walk away.

[482] Already the Pygmy village was alive with women bundling up their household possessions in the baskets they would carry on their
[224] backs. The men were busy checking their hunting nets, examining their arrow shafts and testing their bows, or sharpening the blades of their spears. The children were running about in the semi-darkness,

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO The children were running about in the semi-darkness, laughing and playing, without a care in the world; only a few of the older children, eleven or twelve years of age, helped their parents. 484 [858] The older girls carried an extra basket bulging with plantation foods, or else they carried a baby brother or sister on one hip, bending their heads every now and again to reassure their charge with a kiss full of the warm affection of children. 484 482 883 Some of the older boys carried their fathers' hunting nets, proudly, leaving the more experienced hunters free to set off in pursuit of any game they might come across on the way.

Fires blazed in front of all the huts, and those who had not already eaten were quickly swallowing what they could before setting off. 484 [372] [264] Two of Ekianga's wives, Arobanai and Loku, were already helping each other, the one supporting the basket on the other's back while the tump line around the forehead was tested for comfort and strength. 482 484 [595] In the forest, people cannot carry loads on their heads as they do in open country, because of overhanging branches and the frequent obstacles that have to be climbed over or crawled under. So a tump line is used by the Pygmies—a strip of bark a few inches wide, wound around the bundle and passed over the head. The women support this tump line by the forehead, sometimes easing the strain with their hands, but always with the head down, stooping to take more of the load on the back. The men, if they have to carry a load, generally let the tump line lie across the chest and over each shoulder, just to be different from the women.

I went over to where a group of men were drinking *liko*, a brew of forest berries and nuts and herbs, bitter, but warm and stimulating. 484 [272] They suggested that I should go on ahead with Kenge and a couple of other youths. The women would take all day to get there anyway, they said, even though some had already left. They would stop on the way and collect mushrooms and roots for the evening meal.

Only Ekianga sat silent, outside his hut, watching his third and youngest wife, Kamaikan, cooking his breakfast. He ignored his two 484 595

484 other wives, and they left without saying a word to him. As Kamai-
595 kan squatted over the fire, fanning it until it glowed red, I saw that
she was pregnant, and I gathered from the look she cast after her
two co-wives that her condition was the cause of some jealousy in
the household.

115 Kenge delayed leaving, finding one excuse after another, until the
482 sun was up. He then admitted that he had thought it silly to leave
484 so early, when the forest was still wet and cold. He disappeared for
[513] an hour after that, and when he returned he was carrying a sleeping
[171] mat he had scrounged from a Negro (Pygmies generally sleep on
leaves or sticks), a large bunch of plantains, and a cake of scented
soap. He decided he could not carry my bundle as well as these
things, so he told me I would have to carry my own. Anyway, he
[224] said, he wanted to leave his hands as free as possible in case he saw
a bird or monkey he could shoot for dinner. He pulled the string
of his bow and let it go with a loud twang, shooting an arm out in
the direction the arrow would have gone, pointing to a tree top
where a black-and-white Colobus monkey, idly scratching its stomach,
[186] gazed down at the scene below. I heard later that Kenge considered
himself above acting as a porter; he apparently thought of that as a
job fit only for people of the village, not people of the forest. Any
self-respecting Pygmy carries his own load and no one else's.

484 When the sun was above the trees and the birds were singing and
114 the village half empty, we crossed the road and walked through the
[273] Negro settlement, stopping for a quick last drink of palm wine,
for no such luxuries are to be had in the forest. There were six of us
in all: five Pygmy youths and myself.

[481] The palm wine finished, they set off through the Negro planta-
tions at such a pace that I almost had to run to keep up. At the edge
of the plantations the forest was thick and matted, and the path
entering it was narrow. The ground was still rough where saplings
had been hacked off just above ground level, and on either side was

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here P 484 114
and there where the *fito*—the sapling used by villagers for building [824]
their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once [342]
the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest [137]
it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost
impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a P 484
path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above 481 114
their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without [487]
even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they
cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level
for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible
and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a
real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more C 484
ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the 824
farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had 776
reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond P 484
this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such [241]
as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams,
and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market.
Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. P 131
There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a 484
site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies* [126]
three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the [133]
five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very [515]
feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, P
clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before, [533]

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* Folkways Records: FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4483, Music of the Ituri Forest

181
482 singing snatches of songs and shouting back and forth to one another
533 about all the animals they were going to kill and eat.

152 Occasionally we heard an echo of our own voices coming back
522 from the depths of the forest. Then we stopped, and one by one
822 the young men shouted bold phrases to imaginary maidens, holding
their noses and mouths, ready to stifle the shriek of laughter that
would come when the same rude challenge was shouted back at
them. They clapped one another on the back and held onto one
another for support as they laughed, inventing all sorts of things
they would do and say to any girl who answered them in such a
152 way. The Pygmy is not in the least self-conscious about showing
522 his emotions; he likes to laugh until tears come to his eyes and he
is too weak to stand. He then sits down or lies on the ground and
laughs still louder.

139 As we went on the forest became more spacious, and it seemed
484 lighter, although the trees still met high overhead and shut out all
direct sunlight. There was no need to worry about overhanging
branches now, for here the forest was virgin, untouched by the
sacrilegious hand of the village cultivator, and clear of heavy undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot, carpeted with leaves that
[481] sometimes concealed a projecting root. But the pygmies knew where
every obstacle was, even though they could not see it, and they
picked up their feet to avoid tripping.

On all sides we could see for twenty or thirty yards. The giant
trunks of the old trees were surrounded by slender, branchless saplings, all so far apart that we could wander off the path freely at
[487] almost any point. Here and there the main path was crossed by a
smaller path made by some animal, and Kenge frequently turned off
481 and followed the animal trail, beckoning me to follow. A few min-
484 utes later he would stop and sit down on his bundle, and then
186 when the rest appeared along the main path he would jump to his
feet and make fun of them for "walking like the BaNgwana." The

BaNgwana are the most disliked of all the neighboring Negro tribes, 481
and among the Pygmies they are derided particularly because of their 484
slow, ungainly gait, and as being the least able to walk in the forest 186
as you should be able to walk—swiftly, silently, and easily.

Kenge was full of surprises. In spite of the apparent sophistication 484
evidenced by his attachment to Western clothes and scented soap, 224
he still knew his way about the forest better than most Pygmies, and [015]
he certainly had a sharper eye for game. We stopped several times while he and another youth stalked carefully up to a tree where they had seen something. Each time they shot their arrows and stood poised on the balls of their feet, silent and motionless, only to relax and clap their hands in disgust and shake their heads as they explained to each other why they had missed. And each time all I could see of the bird or monkey was a shaking of the branches as it fled in fright.

After about two hours we came to Apa Kadiketu—the Camp of 131
Kadiketu. Nobody was sure who or what Kadiketu was, but that was 484
what the spot had always been called. This was where I had first [114]
lived in a Pygmy camp, and it was strange to pass through the same place now. There was not a sign of a hut; just the faintest outline of what had been a campsite and a slight tangle of undergrowth showing that some clearing had once been done. Kadiketu was not quite halfway to the Lelo River, and we stopped there for a few minutes to have a smoke.

But even while we were resting, squatting on our bundles, Kenge 222
and his friends were looking around. Before we left they made a [114]
quick foraging expedition and returned in as much time as it took me to hitch up my bundle and try to find some way of fastening the tump line so that it relieved my aching shoulders. A typewriter and a load of paper and notebooks wrapped up inside a thick blanket made the load awkward and heavy. Each of my companions had handfuls of mushrooms, great fluffy pink things, fresh and firm.

222 [482] Tearing large leaves from the undergrowth they made small bundles and hitched them[1] to their belts, using the stems of the leaves for twine.

481 484 Not much farther on we heard loud singing ahead of us, and we came up behind the women who had started early. They had also [222] [482] been gathering mushrooms, but they had larger bundles, and the small children were carrying them in their arms. Unlike the men, the women ambled along slowly, sometimes chatting, sometimes singing. This was not simply because they were happy to be back in the forest, but because by going slowly they could keep an eye open for edible roots and fruits, and by singing and chatting loudly they scared away any of the animals that might otherwise have been [[136] startled into attack. There are few dangers in the forest, but there are plenty of buffalo and leopard that would attack without question if you came on them unawares. Even two Pygmies (and they never travel singly if they can help it) will shout and clap their hands as they walk along the forest trails in single file. The only time they are silent is when actually hunting.

372 484 We passed the women and children, and shortly afterward we passed a second group, those who had left before dawn. They were still sitting around the fires they had built to cook themselves a meal. Every woman, when moving camp, carries with her a burning ember wrapped heavily in fire-resistant leaves. None of these Pygmies knows how to make fire. The first thing they do when they stop on the trail for a rest is to unwrap the ember and, putting some dry twigs around it, blow softly once or twice and transform it into a blazing fire. I have never learned what the knack is. Many a time I have been blowing and fanning my fire, trying to get it to come up, when a little slip of a girl, or a boy almost too young to walk, has come along, knelt down, and given two little puffs that have sent the flames leaping upward. It is damp and cool in the forest, and at any time of the day it is pleasant to sit around the fire; but at

[1] [i.e., bundles of mushrooms. - Analyst]

night, when it is cold, the fire gives not only warmth but protection, 372 484 keeping the animals away.

It was midday when we waded through a marshy patch left by 484 133 recent floods. Usually there is little marsh or swamp, but every now and again dead branches and fallen trees will block a stream and the whole area will be flooded, perhaps for miles, until a heavy rain washes the obstruction away. We had to splash knee-deep through mud and water for several hundred yards before we reached dry land. The first thing Kenge and the others did then was to find the main [515] stream and wash themselves clean before going any farther.

From here the ground rose steadily and although we could hear streams below us we did not cross any more until just before we got to the Lelo. Up on the ridge the forest was a little thinner, more light filtered through to the ground below, and the world was alive with dancing shadows as the breeze rippled the leaves. But the sun still raised the temperature only to the point where it was pleasantly warm. As we were picking our way down into the Lelo valley we heard distant rumbles of thunder. Kenge stopped and looked up into [821] the tree tops to see which way the wind was blowing. He muttered that it would not rain yet, but if those lazy women didn't hurry up and come and build the huts we would have a very wet night.

But for the moment the sun was shining, and when we finally 361 484 arrived at the site for our camp it was bright and green and cheerful. It was a natural clearing a couple of hundred yards across, with a patch of trees and bush in the center breaking up the clearing so that it was really two. As large and as open as it was, the trees still almost met overhead. The ground, instead of being covered with leaves, was covered with a kind of grass. Kenge dumped his bundle on top of a little hillock several yards across and said that this was where we would have our house built. He then told me to come and see the Lelo itself, hinting that I should have a good bath.

Apa Lelo, or the Camp of Lelo, will always be one of the most 361 114

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

361 114 beautiful parts of the whole forest for me. This is partly because of what happened there, but also because it is one of the places where the forest is at its gentlest and kindest. Even when we left, after a month of heavy rains had turned the campsite into a morass of mud, it was still beautiful, and much as the Pygmies hate a muddy camp they were reluctant to leave. Now, however, all was still green and fresh.

137 132 Elsewhere the forest can be severe, particularly in the mountainous regions; and in many places it is overwhelming in its immensity. The leafy roof where the trees join together can be so far above that you feel as small and insignificant as the other animals roaming the ground below, depending on the forest for life. And at times it can be so powerful that it is frightening. When it whips itself into a fury, conjuring up rain and thunder and lightning, it turns small streams into raging torrents and sends heavy branches or even whole trees crashing down, some of them with trunks as thick as houses, destroying the living trees that stand in their way.

361 137 But even in a storm Apa Lelo was gentle and kind and protective. Here, somehow, one felt superior to the other animals of the forest. At the far end of the camp, just beyond the hillock where Kenge had said our house was to be built, a path led off to the left through a glade where the smell of leaf mold was rich and cool and moist. [136] Termites built their nests there, elfin huts of clay with funny mushroom-shaped roofs; small animals scampered about below and birds fluttered lazily overhead. The world at Apa Lelo was full of delicate colors and shades and whispering sounds, and up in the highest branches orchids shyly hid their delicate heads among the moss.

133 [361] This glade was almost an island, as the Lelo swept around it, all but encircling the camp. The Lelo, the river the Pygmies loved above all others, widened out at the end of its curve into a broad shallow stream, a hundred feet or so across, clear and rippling. When the water was low a bank of shingle rose in the center. In the middle

In the middle
of the day the sun found its way through the leaves and struck this 133
bank, and the women liked to wade out to it and do their washing [296]
there. When the river was as low as this you could wade all the way
across, if you knew where to step, but at other times a huge fallen
tree was used as a bridge.

On the far side the ground rose sharply, and though at first the [137]
forest was still open and friendly, as soon as you reached the top
of the rise it became thick and closed in around you, and the only
paths were those made by animals, narrow and twisting.

Kenge showed me all this with his chest puffed up with pride.
He told me I could drink water from any of the streams or from the [312]
Lelo itself; it was not like living in the village where both the food
and water were dirty. He showed where the women would bathe, 515
and warned me to keep upstream of the shingle bar, so as not to 834
offend them. The other youths had already stripped naked and were [123]
splashing in the water, unashamed, though in deference to an overclad
Westerner they held their hands in front of them when they
turned to face me.

We went back to the campsite and Kenge started clearing the 554
ground. Very shortly afterward three of the great hunters arrived— 361
Njobo, the killer of elephants; Masisi, the proud father; and Manyalibo,
the gruff, good-humored conservative. They shouted a greeting
as they came into the clearing, and looking around they threw down
their hunting nets where they thought they would like to have their
houses built. Njobo chose to be just to the south of the hillock; [605]
Manyalibo and Masisi, good cousins that they were, put their nets
down beside each other, opposite. Then almost immediately they 224
disappeared into the forest, each in a different direction, each with
bow and arrows. In less than fifteen minutes Kenge, who had been
examining the tracks of a huge buffalo that had passed by the night
before, suddenly stood still and motioned me to be quiet. With his [825]
hands he mimed an antelope running and pointed into the forest
behind Manyalibo's chosen site.

224 behind Manyalibo's chosen site. Almost immediately there was a
shout from Njobo, and Kenge bounded across the camp, picking up
[516] a hunting net as he went. Not more than fifty yards away we found
Njobo standing, tense, at the end of a fallen tree, peering inside the
hollow trunk. Masisi and Manyalibo came running up through the
glade, and taking the net they quickly put it up around the tree
trunk, while Njobo hurried off and returned with his spear.

Looking into the black, gaping hole I saw two eyes, glowing
bright red and unblinking, staring at me from the darkness. Njobo
825] had seen a *sondu*, a highly coveted kind of antelope, and had cornered
[136] it in a sharp bend of the river so that it had been forced to take
[151] refuge in the tree trunk, trapping itself. All this had taken place so
silently that only Kenge's sharp ears had picked up the noises. When
the net was firmly fixed Manyalibo stood on the tree trunk and
thrust a long stick inside, keeping himself well clear of the opening.
The forest antelopes have small but sharp horns, and when trapped
they are vicious and dangerous. The sondu, snuffling with anger and
pain, came bolting out so fast that it tore the mesh of the net. It
lay there struggling and bleating, but only for an instant. All three
hunters were on top of it, and two of them held it down while Njobo
cut its throat with the blade of his spear. He looked up at me happily
and said, "This is going to be a good camp, for the forest has
given us meat before we have even built our houses."

484 Within another fifteen minutes the first of the women arrived.
482 They had heard the thunder and had hurried, traveling (as they can
when they want to) as fast as any man, in spite of the loads on their
361 backs and the children on their hips. They were singing as they
342 strode into the camp with long, graceful steps, and, just as the men
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533 had done, each cast a quick look around and chose a spot where she
would build a house for her family. Njobo's wife, pretty young
361 Masamba, was among them. She went to where Njobo had put
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412 his net, threw down the load from her back, and without stopping

for a rest took out her knife and went off to cut the branches and 361
leaves needed to built their new home. Njobo shouted after her that 342
she should get enough to build my house as well, saying that we 412
would help her by collecting more leaves. He called to Masisi and [123]
Kenge, and I followed the three of them, wading across the Lelo and into the forest beyond.

The afternoon was already half spent, and by the light we could 342
tell that the sky was clouding over. Njobo knew where there was a 314
large patch of mongongo leaves. It was some distance off, but if we 48]
hurried we could get there and collect enough for all of us, he said, 114
looking at me doubtfully. Kenge, ever practical, replied that I had 123
long legs, so surely I would be able to keep up with them, and I [821)
would be useful as I could carry twice as many leaves as all of them
put together. I did keep up, but only just. Because of the time and [487]
the approaching rain they followed small antelope trails instead of the larger buffalo trails, and in this way kept to a more direct route. But even they had to stoop as they ran along, and as they did not bother to cut the branches above their heads I had to go practically on hands and knees in places. Kenge was in front of me, and every now and then he warned me by a gesture of a thorny vine, so thorny that if you run into it unawares it can tear your skin to shreds.

We ran for half an hour without stopping, arriving at a thick growth of mongongo which stretched along the hillside for half a mile or more, down to the banks of the stream below. It was like a forest within a forest, the giant stems ending in the large heart-shaped leaves above our heads.

For a whole hour we cut leaves, working quickly and silently, cut- 314
ting each leaf with a knife in the right hand, leaving a stalk about 114
four inches long, and adding it to a bundle in the left hand. The 123
others had to bend the plants down to reach the leaves, but even so [412]
they quickly accumulated small bundles. When they could hold no more in their hands they simply put the leaves down on the ground

314 and moved on. Yet when we had cut enough and were at the far
114 edge of the mongongo grove, they knew exactly where each bundle
123 had been put, and retraced their steps gathering the leaves as they
went. Only then, when all the leaves were collected together, did
[222] they relax and talk, and pick a few wild berries with which to refresh
themselves. Then they cut lengths of vine and softened it by running it quickly from hand to hand, pulling it sharply through the fork of the thumb. They laughed when I tried this and cut myself. With this vine they tied up the bundles, gave me the largest, and we set off on the way back, as fast as we had come.

361 As we came through the glade on the hillside above the Lelo we
114 heard the voices of women and the laughter and shouting of children
from the camp across the river, and when we got down lower and were wading through the cool stream, washing off all the dirt and perspiration, we could see long columns of smoke spiraling lazily upward through the trees. The camp was coming to life.

361 The clearing was full of activity. About twenty families had arrived,
342 and each had already put up the framework of its little house.
Arobanai and Loku, Ekianga's two senior wives, put their houses side by side at the north end of the camp, leaving a space for Ekianga and Kamaikan when they came out. Masisi's eldest son, Ageronga, helped his wife build their house between Masisi's and Loku's. Old Sau had already almost finished her hut, between my hillock and Arobanai's but closer to Arobanai, on the far side of the
342 path that led off to the Lelo. Masamba was finishing the frame for
[123] her house; mine was complete, except for a few extra sticks and
[122] leaves needed for the doorway. She had done mine first. Now she
[516] squatted down making her own home, driving the saplings into the
ground with sharp thrusts, each time in exactly the same place, so that they went deeper and deeper. When she had completed a circle she stood up and deftly bent the fito over her head, twisting them together and twining smaller saplings across, forming a lattice frame-

work. Then she took the leaves we had collected and slit the stalks 342
toward the end, like clothespins, hooking two or three of them together.
When she had enough she started hanging them on the
framework like tiles, overlapping each other and forming a waterproof
covering. There were leaves left over when she had finished, so
she let other women take them for their houses.

Everyone was working at something, and all were chattering and 342
making fun of the late-comers who had not yet finished leafing their 476
huts, saying how wet they were going to get when the rain came. But [622]
I noticed that those who had already finished, like Masamba, even
went back to the forest to cut more wood and leaves to help the lazy
stragglers who had spent too much time gathering food and eating
it on the way in. Sometimes there were as many as four women
working on one hut, some hanging leaves from the outside, working
upward, others preferring to work from the inside, pushing the leaves
through the lattice and working from the top down. Once in a while [855]
there was a loud wail as some playful child got in the way and was
soundly slapped by his mother.

Just before dusk there was a sudden darkening and a wind swept 132
through the tree tops making leaves and small branches fall to the
ground, spinning and fluttering lightly. Then with a sudden hissing
sound, loud and ominous, the sky seemed to open and the rain came
pouring down. In the villages, the rain comes down so hard that it
can almost hurt you, stinging the skin and blowing into the eyes and
nose and mouth, but in the forest its fall is broken by the trees and
by the time it reaches the ground it has spent its energy.

There were angry shouts from the men as the lightning flashed [821]
and the thunder rumbled on and on, and they peered anxiously from
the tiny entrances to their huts to see when it was going to end. If
it went on too long it would spoil the hunting for tomorrow. My hut 122
was filled with the bachelors, all of whom Kenge had grandly invited 132
in. He explained that they were too old to sleep with their parents 589

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591 and, not being married, had no huts of their own. We had brought
our fire into the hut when the rain started, and with the heat of that
132 and of about fifteen bodies I was nearly suffocated. Every now and
342 then the rain found its way through the leaves above and sent a tiny
waterfall cascading to the floor. Then someone would stand up and
inspect the roof carefully, decide which leaf should be moved, and
pushing his fingers through the lattice adjust it. If he moved the
wrong leaf it started a leak in another place, bringing howls of annoyance
from whoever was beneath. Kenge said it was always like
[581] this with a new hut, that was why it was so bad not to be married.
[593] If you were married, naturally your wife would get up when it
rained at night and fix the roof. But once the leaves had settled down,
not even the hardest rain would come in until the leaves got old and
dried out and began to curl. Tomorrow, he said, he would cover the
roof with dead wood and branches to hold the leaves flat.

512 The rain lasted only for half an hour, and as soon as it was over
[132] everyone came out of the huts. The fires were built up outside
[372] again; the women made a few adjustments to the roofs where they
[462] had found bad leaks; the men wandered off idly with their bows and
[224] arrows to see if they could find a bird or monkey for the evening
meal before it was too dark. The huts steamed as they dried out, and
a blue haze of smoke hung above the camp and was colored suddenly
with orange and gold and red as the clouds parted and the sun on the
[578] invisible horizon sent a last blaze of light across the sky. The birds
burst into a final chorus of song, and two women argued loudly with
each other as to which should have the rest of the leaves that Masamba
had cut to help them.

Everyone was tired from the long day's trek and from the flurry
of building camp so quickly, and as soon as it was dark and the evening
meal had been eaten we all crept into our huts and went to
[122] sleep. Kenge, seeing that I was a little concerned, had turned some
of the bachelors out, so there were only nine of us. For an hour the

For an hour the
others lay around the fire, while I was pushed into a corner, and 517
discussed where they would go to hunt the next day and which girls 521
they would flirt with. They poked sleepily at the fire, sending up 512
showers of sparks and filling the hut with smoke. In all the huts
around us, families were chatting among themselves in a drowsy
way, and occasionally some eavesdropper shouted a suitable comment,
bringing a burst of laughter from all the nearby huts. The leaf walls
keep out no sound at all, and anything said in an ordinary speaking
voice can be heard four or five huts away. But before long the voices
got sleepier and sleepier, and finally the only sounds were the chirping
of crickets, the soft swishing of the already swollen Lelo, and
the quiet falsetto of Makubasi as he sat outside his hut, all alone
by a blazing fire. He held his baby son on his lap, and sang a lullaby, [533]
half to himself and half to the child. He was still singing when [254]
I went to sleep.

The next morning the camp was up at dawn, and before it was 512
properly light there was hardly a soul left about—only old Tungana, [887]
sitting where his son Makubasi had sat the night before and like
his son singing to the baby on his knee. Kenge said that some of [224]
the men had gone hunting early, because they needed a lot of meat [065]
to begin the molimo festival for Balekimito and they did not want to
start until they had plenty of food. The rest of the men and women [313]
were out cutting the leaves and saplings needed to finish building the [314]
camp. We went to join them, not far off. The rest of the day we
spent making the simple furniture of a Pygmy household.

Sticks lashed together and bound by vine thongs to a frame make 352
one of the most uncomfortable beds in the world. The sticks themselves [284]
are comfortable enough, but for some reason these beds are
made so that each end bends sharply upward and however you lie
on it the effect is worse than being in a badly slung hammock. Some [513]
Pygmies don't bother with a bed but just put the sticks on the
ground and lie on them, or sleep on dry leaves. Tables are made

352 the same way, the frame resting on four forked sticks, but we were the only household to bother with a table. The others would build [251] them later, Kenge said, when the hunting brought in so much meat that they could spare some to dry for the villagers. Then they would build tables higher than ours, and light fires under them.

[284] Chairs were even simpler to make. Kenge cut four sticks, each about three and a half feet long, and twisted a vine thong around the middle of the bundle. He stood them on the ground, and with a turn of his hand he splayed out the ends and had a comfortable
352 seat. When you get used to this kind of chair you can even go to
516 sleep, resting your back along one stick and hooking your feet over
515 the opposite one. Pygmies, in the forest, are clean people, and they do not like sitting on the ground. Either they make these simple chairs or they sit on logs, often on the end of a log that is sticking out of a fire. If the worst comes to the worst they will pull a leaf from the roof of the nearest hut and sit daintily on that.

361 During the day more families arrived, and while they were busy
578 building their huts, those who had arrived the day before put the finishing touches to theirs. Sometimes someone would apparently have a grudge against a neighbor, or a dislike for someone who had built a hut opposite. I saw several women turning the entrances of their huts to point in different directions, toward friends or relatives. During the course of any one camp women are continually adding [126] to their huts or changing the way they face. I found that a good way of keeping track of the little jealousies that exist in any small community was to make a daily plan of the camp, noting which huts were being altered to face in which direction. I noticed that Arobanai, Ekianga's senior wife, faced her hut very deliberately away from old Sau, and that nobody was anxious to make use of the space between Sau's hut and mine to build there.

361 On the third day Ekianga arrived with Kamaikan, and they in-

stalled themselves with the rest of the family at the north end of the 361
camp. Shortly afterward Cephu arrived. Ekianga had brought news [578]
that he was on his way, and there had been a lot of argument. In [224]
spite of the suspicious killing of a sondu on the first day, the hunting
since had not been very good, and already the camp was large. There
were about twenty-five huts now, forming two circles, one on each
side of the central barrier of brush and trees.

In the early afternoon there was a silence in the camp and Kenge [151]
stood listening, looking across the camp to the south. He turned
and told me that Cephu was not far away and would be here in a
quarter of an hour. Almost to the minute Cephu arrived, leading a 361
band of another five families. Most of them stopped at the edge of 576
the camp at the south end; only Cephu and one other came over
to the main camp to greet us and announce his arrival. A new fire
had been built in the center of our clearing, opposite Manyalibo's
hut, and Cephu sat down there, one of the younger men getting up
to give him his chair. He asked about the hunting and gave us news
of the village. He said that his brother, who was a cripple, had not
wanted to come so far and had made a small camp half way, near
Apa Kadiketu. After a few minutes he left, not having been offered
anything to eat or any tobacco to smoke, and started building his
own camp about fifty yards to the south of the extreme edge of the
clearing. He built a tight little circle of huts, connected by a path 361
to the main trail on one side and to the camp on the other. He
chose that site because he had some relatives at that end of our camp.

The same day Manyalibo's daughter also arrived, with her hus- 156
band, Ausu. Ausu was a handsome Pygmy, strong, and clever at [551]
hunting both with spear and with net. He had caught many wild [224]
pig, although he was only in his early twenties, and once, when still
in his teens, he had nearly been killed by one. His wife, Kondabate, 156
was a Pygmy belle if there ever was one, and she knew it. The two 832 826
had been married for nearly three years but had no children. Kon- [842]

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152 dabate still had her fine maiden's figure, with firm upstanding breasts. 826 Nobody ever mentioned the fact that they were childless. Kondabate [illegible] decorated herself more than any other Pygmy girl I have known, 156 and by every possible means, Negro and Pygmy. She not only dyed 152 302 her body with designs of vines and fruits, painted on with the black 304 juice of the gardenia fruit, but she also had elaborate patterns cicatrized on her stomach, and her teeth were filed to sharp points so that when she smiled or laughed, as she frequently did, she looked [361] just a little dangerous. Kondabate decided to build her house to the north of the hillock, so that she was next to old Sau, and opposite her father.

765 During the afternoon Amabosu, Sau's son—the great singer—went around from hut to hut with Manyalibo's adopted son, Madyadya. (Manyalibo had offered his *molimo* for Balekimito's festival, as Ekianga said he had none.) The two youths stood outside the [283] entrance to each hut with a basket and a length of cord made from *nkusa* vine, the kind of cord used for making hunting nets. Madyadya held one end of the cord while Amabosu tied the other in a [262] noose and laid it in the doorway of the hut. The owner of the hut, or her husband if she was not there, would put a small bunch of bananas in the noose, or a manioc root, or a bundle of mushrooms, or perhaps even a small piece of meat, and Madyadya would jerk the string taut. After a brief mock struggle he would haul in the catch and put it in his basket, then go on to the next hut. From every hut 765 the two collected an offering of food in this way. When their basket 392 was full they hung it up on a tree stump beside the central fire that was now blazing between Manyalibo's hut and the hut his daughter was busily making. This fire had itself been made up from offerings of wood collected from each family hearth. I remembered seeing Manyalibo go around taking an ember or log from every fireplace, whether the owners were there or not.

765 562 I noticed that only men sat at this fire and asked Kenge why this

was. He told me it was the *kumamolimo,* "the place of the molimo," 765
and now that everyone was here we were going to start the festival. [562]
The food that had been collected from hut to hut was to feed the molimo, because the molimo was a hungry animal that ate a great deal. He added pointedly that it smoked a great deal too, and when [123]
I gave him several packets of cigarettes he solemnly put them with the food in the molimo basket.

About an hour later, when I was in my hut, I noticed that Ma- 765
kubasi and Ausu were standing outside, obviously wanting to say 123
something. Usually they were not backward about interrupting, and I was puzzled when Ausu beckoned with his head that I should come outside. He whispered in my ear that a few of them were going off to get the molimos, as we were to start the festival that night. Masimongo, Kenge's brother-in-law, had said that he, as well as Manyalibo, wanted to bring out his molimo, and make it a doubly great festival. Half a dozen youths were waiting to see if I would go with [481]
them, but they told me that the place where the molimo lived was a long way off and we would have to run all the way and return when it was dark.

Of course I said I would go, and we started off immediately. But 765
halfway across the camp Masimongo leaped into my way and 123
shouted that I was not to go. For a moment there was a loud and 481
sharp argument, most of which I could not follow. Finally Njobo, to whom everyone always listened, said that he had seen me in the forest and knew I could travel as well and as fast as the others, so that I would be safe. Masisi then objected with a shrill torrent of words, saying that the molimo was none of my business. For a moment I felt like saying I would not go, as I certainly did not want to cause any bad feeling. The others were already moving off at a run, down the path through the glade, not waiting for me.

Njobo pushed me on the shoulder and said to follow quickly, if I was sure I could keep up and would not be afraid of traveling in the

765 forest in the dark. He said the others would not be able to wait for
123 me if I dropped behind; this was a serious matter. As I hesitated he
481 added, in a loud voice directed at everyone in general, but particularly
to Masimongo and Masisi, that the molimo had already sung to me
[885] and no harm had come of it. I was after all an adult, and of the
forest, so there was no reason why I should not go with the others.

He was still talking as I caught up with Makubasi, who was hanging back to see if I was coming. We jumped into the Lelo, more swollen than ever, and struggled across. The water came up to my waist, nearly up to his shoulders. My shoes filled with sand and grit, but there was no time to take them off. As we made our way through the water the others ducked their heads and washed themselves, and I did the same.

When we climbed out on the far side, Asutu, leading, was halfway
up the hill while I was still splashing around trying to find a foot-
[427] hold in the slippery bank. The forest was not dark yet, but it was
very silent, and for once no one made a sound as we ran, following
the antelope trails, toward the north.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

000

Illustrations

Photographs by Colin M. Turnbull

[P 72-A]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

142
292
591
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Tungana, a grandfather many times over, in a gennet-skin cap.

[P. 72-B]

Masisi hunts birds and monkeys. The wooden point of his arrow is tipped with poison.

224
411

[P. 72-C]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Opposite: Kenge uses a hunting bow as a musical instrument.

000

Agpunga's wife prepares a bundle of mongongo leaves for thatching her hut.

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[P 72-D]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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411
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Kenge uses a hunting bow as a musical instrument.
[P.72-E]

224
137
424

A group of men sets off for the hunt, some carrying their hunting

[P.72-F1]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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nets, others spears or bows and arrows.

[P. 72-F2]

000 *Opposite:* Asofalinda's eldest daughter being painted with *kangay* juice for a wedding.

142
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881
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Akidinimba (in hat) celebrates her forthcoming wedding with the other girls of the *elima*.

[P. 72-G]

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Asofalinda's eldest daughter being painted with kangay juice for a wedding.
[P 72-H]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Masalito comforts the young Kaoya during the *nkumbi* rites at a Negro village.

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[F 72-I]

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A Pygmy camp. This one is Cephu's.

[P 72-J]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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C
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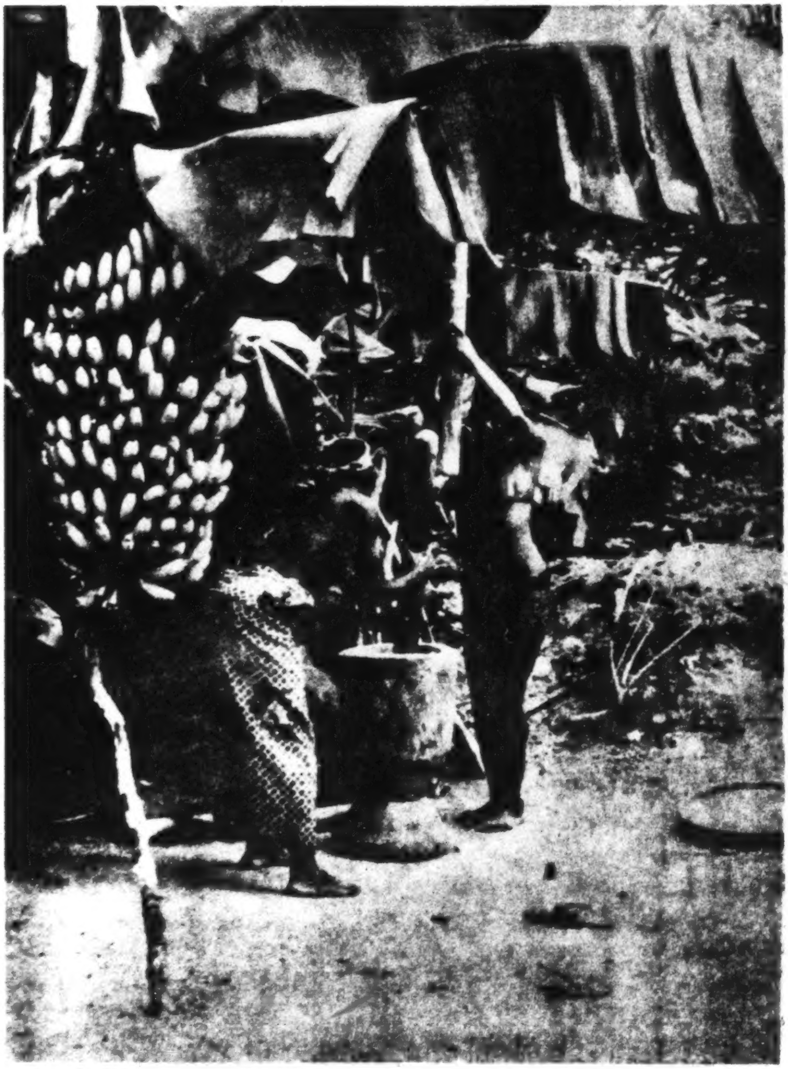

A Pygmy woman (right) helps a villager pound locallyy grown rice.

[P. 72-K]

000 *Opposite:* A Pygmy woman (right) helps a villager pound locally grown rice.

Old Moke (in a sloth-skin hat) listens as Cephu tells a legend.

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[P 72-L]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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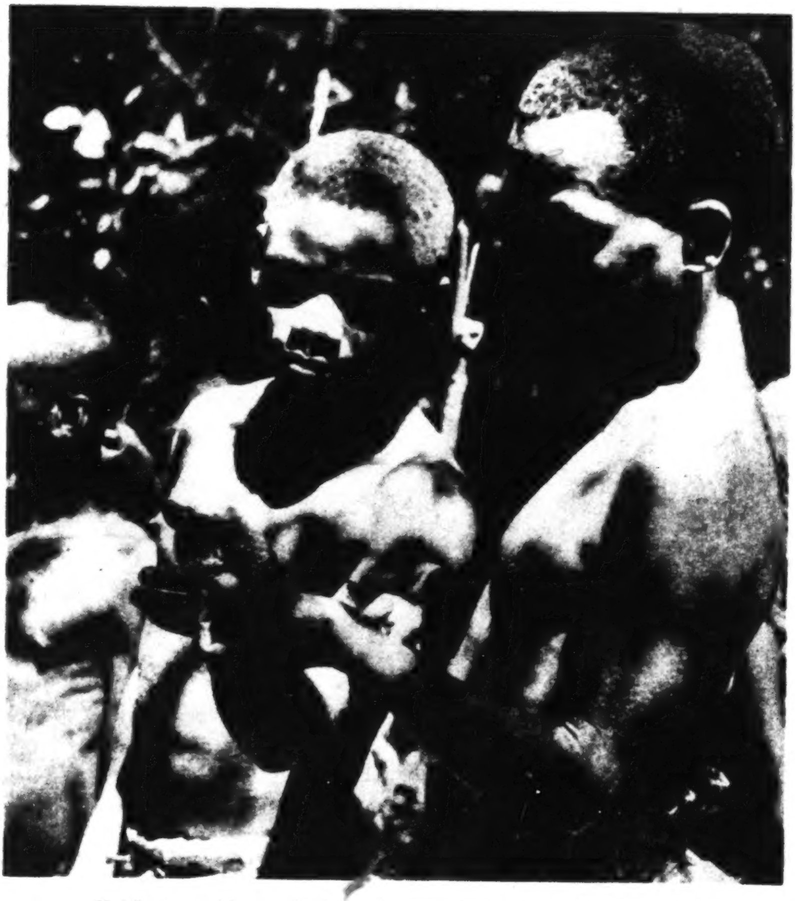

Kelekome and his uncle, Masalito, examine a piece of honeycomb to see if the hive is ready for raiding. Honey is probably the most prized food in the forest.

[P.72-M]

4

The Song of the Forest

THE TRAILS WE FOLLOWED were narrow, and in places even the Pygmies had to stoop and bend. We ran at a steady pace without slowing up once. There was never any hesitating as to direction, even though there were times when it was difficult to see any trail at all. When we climbed upward we went faster because that made it easier to keep a footing. I was the only one whose feet made any noise; the others ran so lightly that they barely touched the ground but rather seemed to skim along just above it, like sylvan sprites. 487 481 123

After about forty-five minutes we came to a stream that was larger than the others we had crossed, though it was only a few yards wide 481 123 133

481 and very shallow. For the first time we slowed to a walk and stepped
123 through the bubbling water, lifting our feet high so as not to splash.
[133] The forest was silent now, except for the evening chorus of crickets
[136] and frogs, and on the far side of the stream we halted while Ausu
and Makubasi looked around and listened, to reassure themselves that we were alone.

765 I had no idea of how far we had come or in what direction, but
182 I knew we had left the camp far behind. It was the first time I had
191 known a group of Pygmies to be so silent. Normally, unless hunting,
[825] they are deliberately noisy, but now, just at the time that leopards would be prowling about in search of food, they seemed unwilling to disturb the forest or the animals it concealed. Just the opposite, in fact. It was as if they were a part of the silence and the darkness of the forest itself and were only fearful lest any sound might betray their presence to some person or thing *not* of the forest.

They stood there, quiet and still, and it struck me with a sudden shock that not one of them carried a spear or bow and arrow. As they peered into the dusk and cocked their heads first on this side then on that, satisfying themselves that we were really alone, it seemed that they felt themselves so much a part of the forest and of all the living things in it that they had no need to fear anything
[778] except that which was not of the forest. One of them said to me,
later, "When we are the Children of the Forest, what need have we to be afraid of it? We are only afraid of that which is outside the forest."

We stood there, water from the stream still running down our legs, until they were satisfied that all was well. Then Makubasi nodded to Madyadya and to another boy. They ran on ahead, and after a
765 whispered discussion two others followed. The rest of us walked slowly
182 on until we came to a small clearing nearby, the far side of which was only just visible as the last glimmer of daylight dwindled away into blackness. We stood there waiting, saying nothing. Ausu and

Makubasi wandered about aimlessly, poking here and there from habit 765 182
to see if there was any tasty fruit to be had for the picking, but it was too dark to see.

Just as I was about to ask where the others had gone they re- 765
appeared, announcing their presence with low whistles that sounded 534
like the call of a night bird. They were in two pairs, each pair carrying between them, over their shoulders, a long slender object. Even at that moment I wondered if they would veer off into the complete blackness of the forest before I could see more closely, but they came on toward us. Madyadya was carrying the rear end of what proved to be a huge tube of some kind, fifteen feet long. He gestured proudly and said, "See, this is our molimo!" Then he
turned and putting his mouth to the end of the trumpet, which it [533]
was, he blew a long, raucous raspberry. Everyone doubled up with [522]
laughter, the first sound they had made since leaving camp.

I was slightly put out by this sacrilege and was about to blame it 765
rather pompously on irreligious youth, when I saw something that 534
upset me even more. I do not know exactly what I had expected, but 123
I knew a little about molimo trumpets and that they were some- 177
times made out of bamboo. I suppose I had expected an object elaborately carved, decorated with patterns full of ritual significance and symbolism, something sacred, to be revered, the very sight or touch of which might be thought of as dangerous. I felt that I had a right, in the heart of the tropical rain forest, to expect something wonderful and exotic. But now I saw that the instrument which produced such a surprisingly rude sound, shattering the stillness as it shattered my illusions, was not made of bamboo or wood, and it certainly was not carved or decorated in any way. It was a length of metal drainpipe, neatly threaded at each end, though somewhat bent in the middle. The second trumpet was just the same, shining and sanitary, but only half the length.

Everyone was looking at me to see what my reactions would be.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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I asked, keeping my voice low, how it was that for the molimo, which was so sacred to them, they should use water piping stolen from roadside construction gangs, instead of using the traditional materials.

Evidently now that they had the trumpets in their possession there was no longer any need for silence, for they answered calmly and loudly with a counter-question. "What does it matter what the molimo is made of? This one makes a great sound, and, besides, it [322] does not rot like wood. It is much trouble to make a wooden one, and then it rots away and you have to make another."

[825]
[533]
Ausu, to prove how well it sounded, took the end of the longer pipe, which evidently belonged to Manyalibo, and all of a sudden the forest was filled with the sound of trumpeting elephants. The others clapped their hands with pleasure and said, "You see? Doesn't it sound well?"

My conservative feelings were still wounded, however, and it gave me some pleasure to see the difficulty the Pygmies had on the way back, carrying a fifteen-foot length of drainpipe through the forest. It was pitch dark now, though the moon was full, yet we still followed only the smallest animal trails, this being the quickest route. Frequently Madyadya, carrying the front end of his foster-father's trumpet, turned too sharply, following the trail, so that whoever was carrying the rear end was forced off the path and the trumpet became jammed between two trees. But in spite of these mishaps we returned almost as quickly as we had come.

When we came to the first stream we all stopped. The moonlight was just strong enough for me to see both trumpets laid carefully in the water, then lifted up so that the water ran through from end to end. "The molimo likes to drink," I was told. We washed our feet and continued, but at every stream we came to the performance was repeated, both trumpets being immersed and allowed to "drink." Every now and again, whoever was at the rear end of a trumpet

managed to find enough breath to blow a long blast that was some- 765
times musical, but more often not. The younger Pygmies all seemed 534
anxious to have a turn, but Ausu, who was the only one who really 123
knew how to play, kept aloof. He ran ahead of us all, silently, into 177
the night.

It was so dark along the trails that I had to run barely two feet 765
behind whoever was in front, occasionally reaching out and touching 123
him to make sure he was still there. I had learned to lift my feet 481
high to avoid roots, but I did not know the trails inch by inch, as the Pygmies did, and once I put my foot in an animal hole and fell. But nobody stopped, and I had to run all the faster to catch up.

Only at the streams was there enough light for us to see each other 765
dimly; and at each stream I looked at those two drainpipes being 534
lovingly washed and fed with water. I was curious as to how far this 123
was a ritual act, and how far it was originally a practical measure that [322]
would make a wooden trumpet swell, closing any possible cracks, so that it would sound better. Ausu said that of course that was why they did it, they did the same thing to all their wooden whistles and flutes as well; it made their voices stronger. Then he added casually, "We know it makes no difference to the sound of the metal trumpet, but we do it anyway."

When we reached the top of the hill that descends, gently at first, then steeply, into the Lelo River, we all halted and stood in the glade. It was lit with silvery patches of light, shining here and there uncertainly, where the moonlight found its way down through the rustling trees. Even the darker shadows glowed every now and then, but with a strange natural luminosity that came from the mushroom-shaped nests of the termites. We could hear the Lelo swishing below, and on the far side of the river voices from the camp floated lazily across to us, as though we were gods and they were mortals, infinitely far away. 765

We stood there for a moment. Then Ausu took the end of the 534

765 long trumpet, with Madyadya holding the front on his shoulder,
534 pointing it over the river toward the camp. Once again the night
765 was shattered as though there were a whole herd of elephants trumpeting
534 533 shrilly all around us. When the echoes died away, the camp
825 across the river had fallen silent. Ausu blew into the trumpet again,
and this time it was as if a leopard were growling angrily nearby.
[201] One of the youths clapped himself under the armpit, as Pygmies
frequently do, and said to himself, "That is its voice, just exactly."
He clapped himself again with delight, and gave a little growl of his
own.

765 Little more than a minute had passed when Amabosu, the great
533 singer, appeared from the shadows below us. He looked at us without
156 saying anything, without smiling or making any greeting. His eyes
781 had the strange look they often took on when he was singing or
534 playing the drums in a dance in the village. They seemed to be seeing
something quite different from what was going on in front of
[825] them. He went up to Ausu and took the molimo from him and
gently filled the forest with strange sounds—the rumblings and
growls of buffalos and leopards, the mighty call of the elephant, the
plaintive cooing of the dove. Interspersed were snatches of song,
transformed by the trumpet into a sound quite unlike the song of
men—richer, softer, more distant and unapproachable.

765 He continued blowing as we moved off, down the slope and to
534 the bank of the river, but when we plunged into the water and
123 waded across, the two trumpets left us and were carried upstream.
[533] They growled and bellowed somewhere behind us as we made our
765 way along the path to the camp. In the clearing the men were standing
562 up to see us arrive, and the women were hurrying about doing
what they had to do before shutting themselves up in their huts. The
[858] voice of the molimo had warned them that it was time to retire. The
children had all been chased inside. One by one leaf doors were

pulled across the entrances to the little huts, and only the men were 765
left outside. 562

Njobo was there to greet us, and the first thing he asked was 123
whether I had been able to keep up with the others, or if I had 186
"walked like the BaNgwana." He then turned to the others with an 481
obvious "I told you so" air and said, "You see, it is all right; he knows how to walk." This apparently slight compliment was in fact a very real one, because to the Pygmy it is one of the most important differences between the people of the forest and the people of the village that the latter do *not* know "how to walk." Walking, to the Pygmy, means being able to run swiftly and silently, without slipping, tripping or falling. Every day he depends for his food on his ability to "walk," and more than once his life will be saved by the same ability, when he has to run from a charging buffalo or creep away unnoticed from a sleeping leopard.

Masisi, unbelieving, asked if I had not fallen at least once, and
when he was told I had, he roared with laughter. Masimongo, who [522]
had been another to object to my going, pointed to my torn clothes, dripping with water and perspiration, and filthy where I had fallen, and he too laughed. Nobody mentioned the molimo.

Kenge came up and asked disapprovingly why I had gone off so 115
quickly without telling him. He said he had cooked dinner and now 123
it was all cold and I would have to go without. He gave my clothes 122
a withering look and said he would wash them out the next day, and that I had better take them off now and get dry. I went over to my hut and changed, and when I came out he had a piping hot meal waiting by a blazing fire.

What followed that evening was to follow every evening for the 765
next two months. It was the focal point of the molimo festival, and the repetition every night was an essential part of it. The ceremony, if you can call it that, did not center around ritual objects, as do the

765 ceremonies of the local Negro tribes, nor did it follow any prescribed
[534] ritualistic details beyond a general over-all pattern. It was plain that
the molimo trumpets were not considered as highly sacred objects in
[778] themselves; what was important, for some reason, was the sound
they produced. It was also very clear that the people of the forest
[186] wanted to be quite sure that the village world was well sealed off,
because before the men gathered together that evening I found that
the path leading out of the camp toward the village had been closed.
A fallen branch and some logs had been dragged across it, shutting
out the profane outside world.

The molimo of the Pygmies is not concerned with ritual or magic. In fact, it is so devoid of ritual, expressed either in action or words, that it is difficult to see what it *is* concerned with. Every day, around midday, a couple of youths would go around the camp, just as they had done this day, collecting offerings of food and firewood from hut to hut, for the molimo concerns everyone, and everyone must contribute. And each evening the women and children shut themselves up in their huts after the evening meal, for the molimo is mainly the concern of the men. And when the women have retired the men sit around the kumamolimo—the hearth of the molimo—and gaze into the molimo fire. Nearby a basket hangs, full of the offerings of food that will be eaten later. But first the men must sing, for this is the real work of the molimo, as they say; to eat and to sing, to eat and to sing. Yet behind these apparently simple outer trappings of the festival there was an atmosphere of almost overwhelming expectancy.

765 That first night, after I had eaten my meal, I went over to the
533 molimo fire, halfway between Manyalibo's hut and that of his daugh-
534 ter Kondabate and her husband Ausu, where the men were already
gathering. I noticed that Amabosu, the singer, was not there. I knew why when, a few minutes after the singing had begun, I heard the voice of the molimo answering, way off by itself in the forest. It

no longer worried me that the trumpet was a metal drainpipe instead 765
of a piece of bamboo or wood, because now that I could not see 533
it I realized that Ausu was right. It was the sound that mattered. As 534
the men sang in the camp, the voice of the molimo echoed their
song, moving about continually so that it seemed to be everywhere
at once. During a lull in the singing it started giving animal growls,
and the men looked around to make sure that all the women were
safely in their huts. Almost immediately Amabosu and Madyadya [481]
came running into the camp from the far end, past Cephu's camp,
picking their feet up high in the air so that more than ever they
seemed to be floating above the ground they trod. They came right
up to the fire and squatted down either side of it, the front of the
trumpet still held on Madyadya's shoulder as Amabosu warbled
softly into the other end.

I noticed that the trumpet was still wet; it must have been given 765
a "drink" just before it was carried into the camp. Now both youths 534
stood up, and with Amabosu singing all the time, in reply to the 372
song of the men, Madyadya took the end of the trumpet in his hands [533]
and waved it up and down, passing it through the flames of the
molimo fire and over the heads of all of us sitting there. Some of
the men took up hot ashes and rubbed them over the trumpet, and
some even put live coals in at the far end. As Amabosu sang harder
and louder, sparks flew out over Madyadya's shoulder, disappearing
into the night with the song.

Then the two of them went dancing off, around the camp once 765
and into the forest. There were a few last defiant bellows from the 534
direction of the river, and no more was heard. The men stopped 765
singing and prepared to eat. Two caldrons had been boiling over the 264
fire, and both were now ready. One contained rice, the other a kind [252]
of spinach made from the leaves of the manioc plant. Eaten together [262]
they are delicious. I wondered if there would be any precedence as
to who should eat first, or if there would be any ritual, but there

765 was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of
264 the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished
before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told,
however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed
to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Apparently
765 one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit,
688 if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing.
[536] One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he
showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under
each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the
stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then
his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would
be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The
[825] women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the
forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they
would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing
man.

765 The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest,"
825 and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal,
534 and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they
562 were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet
was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it
was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman
should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds
it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women
thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment
could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more
beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

765 I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing
533 about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could
539 sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the
825 Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

heard such a Beautiful Song that he had to go and see who was singing. 765
When he found the Bird he brought it back to the camp to feed 533
it. His father was annoyed at having to give food to the Bird, but 537 825
the son pleaded and the Bird was fed. The next day the Bird sang
again; it sang the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and again the
boy went to it and brought it back to feed it. This time the father
was even more angered, but once again he gave in and fed the Bird.
The third day (most Pygmy stories repeat themselves at least three
times) the same thing happened. But this time the father took the
Bird from his son and told his son to go away. When his son had
left, the father killed the Bird, the Bird with the Most Beautiful
Song in the Forest, and with the Bird he killed the Song, and with
the Song he killed himself and he dropped dead, completely dead,
dead for ever.

There are other legends about song, all telling how important 765
it is, and I wondered just why. I looked at the others sitting with me 533
around the kumamolimo. The flames from the fire flickered, lighting
up the serious faces, shining brightly in their large, honest eyes.
Some gazed straight into the fire, others leaned back and looked up
into the trees as they sang. A few lay down on their hunting nets,
but they were awake and they sang with the rest. Then I saw that [854]
Makubasi had his infant son on his lap, holding the boy tightly
against him, wrapped in his powerful arms, rocking backward and
forward. He was singing quietly, with his mouth up against his
son's ear. The words of the song, like the words of most molimo
songs, were few. They simply said, "The Forest is Good."

The Pygmies seemed bound by few set rules. There was a general 765
pattern of behavior to which everyone more or less conformed, but [183]
with great latitude given and taken. Even on this occasion, when all [854]
women and children were supposed to be abed, if Makubasi felt like
getting his son and singing to him at the kumamolimo, nobody
objected or thought anything of it. Possibly this was because the [533]

765 533 baby was too young to know what was going on, and so could not tell the others what he saw; possibly simply because it did not matter very much anyway, for the Song was not only Beautiful, it was Good and Powerful.

It took me some time to realize just how important song was. That first night I just thought of it as being a beautiful sound. After we had eaten the food that had been offered to the molimo we sang again, and at one point the younger men got up and danced around the fire, excitedly, but without any of the frivolity that would come later. This was the first night of the molimo and everyone was on his best behavior. Then when the dancing was over we heard the trumpet again, and as we sang it sang back to us, getting farther and farther away. As it went it carried our song with it, deeper and deeper into the forest. Finally we could hear it no more, and only the echoes of our own voices came back to us from the night.

765 533 513 Not long after that old Moke stretched and yawned and said that he was tired and that everyone should go to sleep and let him sleep. But the younger men paid no attention and went on singing, so Moke resignedly joined in. But after another half-hour, when it was not very long before dawn, even the younger men decided to [372] [373] quit. Moke picked up the log he had been sitting on, the end of which was glowing in the hot ashes, and shuffled back to his hut, swinging the log so that it glowed brightly and lit his way across the camp. Manyalibo simply stretched out where he was, right beside the molimo fire, and went to sleep there. A number of youths did likewise, their hunting nets making comfortable beds, but I went back to my hut. I found Kenge there, fast asleep. He was on my bed, wrapped in my blanket, snoring contentedly, and the hut was filled with smoke from the fire he had lit beside him.

765 533 578 788 In spite of the hunting that had to be done each day, the men sang in this way every night. And every night we looked to see who

765 533 578 688 would come from Cephu's camp, for the amount of interest that Cephu showed in the molimo was a topic for constant discussion and criticism. Masimongo, who had relatives in Cephu's camp, always upheld him when he did not appear himself or when his little group made a poor showing. But Manyalibo allowed no such excuses, and his voice carried much more weight. He said, good conservative that he was, that all men should take part in the molimo regardless of what camp they belonged to, if they were anywhere near at all. Then he went through the mime showing what would have happened in the old days, to anyone who did not attend and was found sleeping. I thought momentarily of Kenge.

765 533 535 88 But the molimo was not only a matter of singing late into the night. Each morning, too, there was activity, though of a different nature. The evenings were serious, the older men taking the lead in the singing and leaving the dancing largely to the younger men. Sometimes there was a lot of horseplay, but the older men, like Moke, kept an eye on what was going on and held the youngsters in check. Often the molimo fire was made into two fires, the older men sitting at one and the youngsters at the other, and then all the dancing went on at the youths' fire while the elders sat at theirs and just sang, and watched their sons with dreamy eyes.

765 882 533 534 But in the mornings the youths came into their own completely. Before the first glimmer of light filtered through into the camp, those of us who had managed to get to sleep were waked by a violent and raucous trumpeting from just outside the camp. This brought cries of protest from the older men. Some of them appeared sleepily at the entrance to their huts and shouted, "Animal! Go away and keep quiet and let me sleep!" but to no avail. From the far end of the camp, near the path leading to Cephu's clearing, a wild cavalcade of youths swept into view, shouting and yelling, clustered so thickly that it was impossible to see the trumpet they were carrying. But it was there, with Amabosu blowing it. It blasted and shrilled and

765 882 534 533 growled and bellowed, and it rampaged around the camp, overturning any of the crude chairs that had been left outside, scattering the remains of fires in all directions, and beating on the roofs of huts to wake everyone up. Sometimes the youths seemed to divide at random into two sides and have a sort of tug of war with the trumpet, some trying to lead it in one direction, some in the other. It was not a real contest of strength, only acting. I wondered if perhaps this represented the original struggle for possession of the molimo, a struggle which some say was between Pygmies and animals, or others say was between men and women.

765 688 536 Ekianga took a prominent part in these morning affrays. He used to lead the youths, always holding two spears, one under each arm, pointing down at the ground as though he were looking for any sleeping person who should have been taking part in the activity. Sometimes he acted it out, stopping as though he saw an offender. Then he danced about and finally jabbed the spear blades at the earth.

765 688 183 115 123 I said to Kenge that this was what would happen to him if he went off and took my bed and blanket again before the evening singing had finished. Kenge laughed loudly and shouted across the camp what I had said. But then he became serious and said that he had been singing all the time until Moke had first said he wanted to go to sleep. "When the old men want to sleep it is all right for us to sleep," he said. Then he added laconically, "And of course if we are tired it is all right for us to go to sleep, naturally." He thought the conversation not very interesting, so he gave an animal call and ran with great leaps and bounds, like the antelope he was named for, across the camp to join in the tug of war.

765 578 If anyone had given offense the previous day, usually by being too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut. Cephu's camp of course came in for the most attention, and although Cephu complained loudly

each time, at the time, he never brought it up later as an issue for 765 578
discussion or dispute. One morning, after two brothers, Masalito 765
and Aberi, had been fighting, the "animal of the forest," making 578
more noise than ever, circled all around Masalito's hut and finally 825
pounced on it, beating on the roof and tearing off leaves and sticks. [593]
Some of the youths climbed up a tree that overhung the hut and broke off a heavy branch, which fell on the hut, blocking the entrance, but doing no real damage. The couple inside screamed their protests; then there was a sudden silence. Masalito had done the most dreadful thing of all. He had told the youths to take "that animal" away and throw it back in the water and stop all their noise. This spoiled the whole illusion, which is only a pretense in itself, that the women think that the molimo is an animal and do not know that it is a trumpet surrounded by a lot of noisy youths. The silence was followed by cries from all over the camp—cries of shame shouted by both men and women. The "animal" was galvanized into even greater action, and Masalito's hut was in danger of being completely destroyed. Then Njobo came sleepily out into the clearing and told the youths to go away. They had probably had their fill by then anyway, and they left, making a few last defiant noises, some in the direction of Njobo. As soon as they were gone the women came out of their huts, looked around to see how much damage had been done, then went to wash themselves and get breakfast. Children scampered around the irate Masalito as he cleared up the wreckage outside his hut, and as they danced up and down I heard one of them, bolder than the others, give a tiny hoot in imitation of the trumpet. Masalito tried to grab the child but they all ran away, laughing, to torment someone else.

For a month I sat every evening at the kumamolimo; listening, 123
watching, and feeling—above all, feeling. If I still had little idea 765
of what was going on, at least I felt that air of importance and

123 expectancy. Every evening, when the women shut themselves up,
765 pretending that they were afraid to see "the animal of the forest";
[562] every evening, when the men gathered around the fire, pretending
[825] they thought that the women thought the drainpipes were animals;
every evening, when the trumpet drainpipes imitated leopards and
elephants and buffalos—every evening, when all this make-believe
was going on, I felt that something very real and very great was
going on beneath it, something that everyone else took for granted,
and about which only I was ignorant.

765 It was as though the songs which lured the "animal" to the
533 fireside also invoked some other kind of presence. As the evenings
535 wore on toward morning, the songs got more and more serious, and
781 the atmosphere not exactly tense but charged with an emotion powerful enough to send the dancers swirling through the molimo fire as though its flames and red-hot coals held no heat, as though the glowing embers were cold ashes. Yet there was nothing fanatic or frenzied
[825] about their action in dancing through the fire. Then there was always
that point when the "animal" left the camp and returned to the forest, taking the presence with it. I could feel it departing as the mellow, wistful voice of the molimo got farther and farther away.

765 The morning rampages carried no such presence with them; they
534 seemed more tangible both in actuality and in purpose. I learned that after these rampages the trumpets were brought back to the Lelo River, just above where the men bathed, and immersed there during the daytime so that the women would not see them. One day there was a terrible storm and the Lelo rose four or five feet, transformed into a torrent. When the rain abated in the late afternoon Madyadya went to look for the trumpets and found that one of them had been
[522] washed away. This caused tremendous hilarity, though of course
everyone tried to disguise what they were talking about in front of the women. The women, playing the same game, pretended not to

know what was going on. Eventually the trumpet was found some 765 534
distance downstream, full of sand and gravel and mud.

But that night, in spite of its prosaic experience, it was a mysterious 765
thing again, alive and awe-inspiring and wonderfully beautiful; 781
something that made the eyes of young and old alike light up with
pleasure as they heard it sing. And, as always, there was that look
in Amabosu's eyes as he worked his magic with the drainpipe. He
was no longer Amabosu; he had some other personality totally different,
and distant.

One day, when I was beginning to wonder if I would ever find 123
out what it was all about, I was out with Kenge and his half-brother, 484
Maipe. We had left at dawn, as we wanted to go to a distant part
of the forest, about five hours' walk if one carried no load, and return
by nightfall. About halfway there, far to the north of the Lelo
and near the great falls of the Kare River, we stopped for a rest. We
were in an *idu,* a small natural clearing used by the forest animals
as a salt lick. For some reason we started talking about water and I 123
asked again why the molimo trumpets always drank when they 822
crossed a stream. Maipe, who seldom said much, said, as Ausu had, 765 534
that they always gave wooden trumpets water to drink because it [322]
made them sound better. So, he said, it had become a custom and
they still followed it even if the trumpet was metal. I then asked
why the trumpets were kept in water and was again given a practical
answer—it was the easiest place to hide them. I finally arrived at
the question I had been leading up to—what happened to the molimo
trumpets at the end of a festival? Did they go back to live in
the water?

This struck both Maipe and Kenge as terribly funny. They said 765
certainly not; if the trumpets were kept in the water always they 534
would rot right away and everyone would be spending all their time 824
making new ones instead of hunting. Without any further prompting 322

765 they went on to tell me how the trumpets are normally made, from
534 322 the young straight molimo tree, a tree with a soft center that can be
[824] bored out laboriously, using different vines and woods as drills, twisting
them between the palms of the hands. It took a very long time, they said, but this was the real molimo, and its voice was the best of all. Njobo used to have such a trumpet, but it had rotted away, and now all he had was a short bamboo one.

765 Kenge told me that the trumpet which Masimongo owned had
534 originally belonged to Kenge's father, Adenota, and by rights be-
422 longed to him. But he said he couldn't be bothered with it. "It costs too much, and it makes too much work. Always going around collecting food to feed everyone. . . ." He shook his head in disgust. He had given it to Masimongo when Masimongo married his sister. He could have it back if he wanted, or he could make another, but it was all really too much trouble.

765 Maipe said nothing, but after a while, when we were moving off,
534 he asked me if I would like to see the sleeping place of a trumpet.
123 He led me along an antelope trail, so low that I had to go almost
[487] on hands and knees. It followed the banks of a stream and the mon-
[137] gongo plants grew thickly. After a while the stream descended a slope in small cascades, and the undergrowth cleared. We stood up and saw that water was all around us, rippling over rocks and coming together at the bottom in a sizable pool. Maipe looked around, then walked surely into a patch of undergrowth and called me. I found him at the foot of a tall tree, the base of which was hidden by thick
[824] bush. Through the bush ran a vine, looped around the tree about
[784] three feet off the ground. Maipe said that any Pygmy seeing that would know that it marked the sleeping place of a molimo trumpet and would keep away, for it did not concern him and the molimo should not be disturbed while sleeping. I asked where the trumpet was, and Maipe pointed up above his head. I could see nothing except the immense branches of the tree spreading out high above,

more than a hundred feet up. “That is where it sleeps,” he said. 765
“It is safe there. It sleeps there until it is needed.” 534 123

I asked when it was needed, but Maipe had said all he was going to say. He looked up at the tree for a last time, then motioned with
his head that we should be on our way. Kenge whispered to me that 765
when we got back he would ask Moke to tell me more. It was better 534
for old men to talk about these things. 123 554

That same night, just before the singing started, Moke was sitting 888
outside his hut, whittling away at a new bow he was making, and 115 [322]
talking to himself because there was nobody else for him to talk to. [411]
Kenge had spoken to him when we got back to the camp at dusk, but I did not expect anything to come of it, and Kenge had said nothing to me. Moke looked up and stared in my direction, then he looked back at his bow and continued whittling away with a rough stone. But he spoke a little louder, so that I would hear.

“Ebamunyama,” he said, using the name I had been given, “*pika'i to.*” (“Come here.”) [551]

He spoke as if he was addressing the bow, and when I got to him he still did not look up but just told me to sit down. Talking to the bow in his soft old voice, he said that he had been told I was asking about the molimo, and that this was a good thing and he would tell me whatever he could.

He went on to tell that the Pygmies call out their molimo whenever things seem to be going wrong. “It may be that the hunting is bad,” he said, “or that someone is ill, or, as now, that someone has died. These are not good things, and we like things to be good. So we call out the molimo and it makes them good, as they should be.”

Kind, quiet old Moke, all alone and without a wife to look after 115
him, still working away at his bow, occasionally looking along the [157]
shank to make sure he was keeping the line true—he told me many things that evening. But, most important, he told me, or rather

115 But, most important, he[1] told me, or rather
778 showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest.

182 "The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a
181 father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going
[136] wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal
a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not
[533] looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We
wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

115 All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly
778 that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the
776 nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and
781 182 their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

[1] [i.e. Moke - Analyst]

much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps 115 178
only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So 776
how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must 781 182
be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest 778
world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo 765
songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has 533
died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he 123
had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to under- 778
stand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was [534]
carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

5

The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter

765 533 Every night the men gathered to sing the songs of the molimo, and every morning the youths awakened the camp with their shouts and yells. This went on week after week, yet the daily life of the hunting group continued as though nothing particularly unusual was [152] happening. The men were more sleepy in the mornings, and sometimes tempers were short, but never for long. The necessities of hunting and gathering for a living did not allow it.

512 As soon as the camp was light and there was no further danger of the molimo's making an appearance, the women emerged from their huts and went down to the river to bathe and to collect water

to cook the morning meal. Back in the camp they sat outside their 512
huts, legs straight out in front of them in what seemed the most [516]
uncomfortable position possible. From there they prepared the family 512
repast, placing green plantains in the hot ashes to roast, or con- 252
cocting a stew of mushrooms and chopped leaves with whatever meat
was left over from the day before, covering the pot with large leaves
to trap the steam and to keep out ashes and dirt. Any little chores [593]
that had to be done were done by their daughters, who scurried [859]
around collecting dry twigs to heat the fire up more quickly, or sat
over the fire with their baby brothers, carefully guarding the pot
and making sure it did not upset when the burning wood subsided.
The younger women, freed in this way, relaxed and set to work 512
making themselves beautiful. They sat in full view of the camp, 302
unashamedly painting their bodies with black paste, calling their
friends over to help with the more inaccessible regions. The buttocks
in particular they found difficult to paint themselves, and rather
than waste such an expansive area they would either bend over in
front of a friend, or lie across her lap.

The men combined business with pleasure too, usually meeting 512
at the kumamolimo to drink from a steaming bowl of liko. The [272]
young bachelors mostly cooked their own simple breakfast here, and [264]
together they all discussed the day ahead of them—where they [589]
should go to hunt, what they might expect to find. Cephu never
came over from his little camp at such times. He merely waited until
all the others set off for the hunt, then he joined them.

The men also had to prepare their nets. Helping one another, 224
they uncoiled long lengths of knotted twine, sometimes stretching 476
for three hundred feet, inspecting every section with care. Then, 286
standing upright, the assistant holding the net off the ground, each man coiled his net again so that it hung from one shoulder to within a few inches of his ankle. With a loose length of twine he deftly bound the coils together, gave the net a final shake and hung it from

224
476 some convenient branch or tree stump. Sometimes, when hunting,
286 nets have to be set up rapidly, and anyone whose net has become
tangled through poor preparation and coiling can spoil the chances
of all the others.

224 The women have little to do by way of preparation for the hunt,
462 other than making sure of the strength of the bark tump line by
[482] which they carry their baskets. They put some food in these in case
[251] the day's hunt is a long one, and they wrap a glowing ember from
[372] the family fire in large, damp leaves, and sit down and wait for the
men to set off.

In normal times there is often a dance before everyone departs for the hunt. Men and women circle the camp, singing a hunting song, looking from right to left, clapping their hands and leaping extravagantly in imitation of the animals they hope to catch. But this was rare during the days of the molimo as all felt the lack of rest.

224 Another form of hunting magic, if you can call it that, was a
825 paste made from various parts of an antelope, particularly the heart
[237] and the eye. The charred flesh is mixed with spittle and ground
to a paste, then put in an inverted antelope horn and stuck in the
ground near the family fire. Just before going on the hunt, members
of the family smear one another with some of the paste, using a twig
to dig it out of the horn. It is difficult to say whether this form of
[177] magic is of Pygmy or Negro origin. I rather think the latter, because
only a few families practiced it, and they were highly criticized by
the others as being antisocial. They were trying to get success for
224 themselves at the expense of the others. On one such occasion a fam-
777 ily had a long run of good luck, the animals always falling into their
net, while others had no luck at all. It was decided that this must
have been due to *anjo*, as the medicine was called, so everyone,
including the offenders, agreed that the only thing to do was to de-
stroy the horns that held the medicine. Everyone who had such a
magic horn gave it to old Moke and promised not to make any more

selfish magic. Moke threw the horns in a fire and no more was said. 224 777
It so happened that the family in question continued to have good luck for some time.

Hunting, for a Pygmy group, is a co-operative affair—net-hunting 224
particularly. The use of private magic is frowned on, though there is no law against it. The sacred hunting fire is all that they consider [372]
right and necessary, and this is found throughout the forest. It is thought to secure the blessing of the forest which provides the game, and to bring good luck to the entire group. Even those groups that hunt mainly with bow and arrow, hunt not as individuals, but for the group as a whole. For the net hunters it is impossible to hunt alone. Men, women and children all have to co-operate if the hunt is to be successful.

The "Fire of the Hunt" simply involves the lighting of a fire at 224
the base of a tree a short distance from the camp. In other Pygmy 372
groups I have seen a variation in which the fire is lighted within the camp, special sticks around it pointing in the direction the hunt is going to take. In this case the fire is surrounded by a long and heavy vine laid in a circle on the ground, and when the game is brought home it is placed within this circle before being divided. But this particular group, and others in the area, were less formal.

I remember one morning in particular when we went to kindle the Fire of the Hunt outside the camp, because it was the day that old Cephu committed one of the greatest sins possible in the forest.

I doubt if any of us had managed to snatch more than two hours' 765
sleep, and we were all quiet while preparing for the hunt. In a Pygmy 578
camp this is the surest danger signal of all, for usually everyone is talking 152
and laughing and shouting rude remarks from one end of the camp to the other. It was not only that we were tired, but of late Cephu had refused to contribute to the molimo basket, and that morning he had been heard to call out, in his loudest voice, that he was fed up with the molimo of "that camp over there." Even though he always

765 Even though he[1] always
578 made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought
152 of as the same camp, and whether or not we appreciated his presence
621 we thought of his camp and ours as being the same. Even his unwillingness to take part in the molimo was accepted, to maintain some semblance of unity; but this sudden statement made it impossible to ignore Cephu's feeling of rivalry any longer. Rather than cause an open breach, everyone in the main camp kept his thoughts to himself and was silent.

224 About an hour after dawn, four or five youths with their nets and
372 spears went off to light the hunting fire. I went with them, and only when we had crossed the Lelo and were on the other side did they speak. Then it was about trivialities, and soon they were chatting and laughing as though nothing were wrong. Shortly afterward we were joined by half a dozen of the younger married men, the most active hunters, and we lit the fire at the top of the hill. Leaves and twigs were piled around the base of a young tree, and an ember brought from the camp set them ablaze. More leaves were thrown on so that dense clouds of smoke went billowing up to the invisible sky, until finally the flames burst through with a great roar of victory.
[182] There was no great ritual or ceremonial, but somehow this act put the
hunters in harmony with the forest and secured its blessing and assistance for the day's hunt. The Pygmies regard fire as the most precious gift of the forest, and by offering it back to the forest they are acknowledging their debt and their dependence.

224 As we sat around waiting for the others, one or two couples passed
[222] by. They were going ahead so they would have extra time for gathering mushrooms on the way. They paused to chat and then walked
224 on, lightly, swiftly, and gaily. Before long the main body of hunters
372 arrived and asked where Cephu was. We had not seen him. It
578 seemed that he had left the camp shortly after us but instead of
156 passing by the hunting fire had followed a different path. Someone suggested that he was building a fire of his own. This brought cries

[1] [i.e., Cephu. - Analyst]

of protest that not even Cephu would do such a thing. There was 224
much shaking of heads, and when Ekianga arrived and was told what 372
had happened he stood still for a moment, then turned around, looking 578
in all directions to see if there was any sign of smoke from an- 156
other fire. He said just one word, "Cephu," and spat on the ground. [201]

By the time we got to the place where we were to make our first cast of the nets everyone was more silent and miserable than ever. It did not make matters any better to find Cephu there already, [262] contentedly sitting over a fire eating roast plantains. He looked up and greeted us in a friendly way, and when asked why he had followed his own path he opened his eyes wide and softly said that he had misunderstood and taken the wrong trail. There were angry remarks, but Cephu ignored them all and went on munching at his plantain, smiling at everyone in his kind, gentle way.

Ekianga and a few others made a brief reconnaissance, and when 224 they came back they gave instructions as to the best direction for setting up the nets. The womenfolk, who had been foraging around for mushrooms and nuts, picked up their baskets and went ahead with the small children. They trod lightly and made no noise beyond an occasional crunch of a rotten branch, buried deep beneath the carpet of leaves. We all spread out in a long semicircle, each man knowing exactly who should be to his right and who to his left. I went with Maipe, who had been sent by Njobo with his net. We soon lost sight and sound of the others, but Maipe knew just where he would be expected to set up his net, and he took a short cut. I lost all sense of direction and could not even tell on which side of us the women were waiting for the signal to beat in toward our nets. We followed a little stream and paused by an enormous outcrop of huge stone boulders, almost perfectly square in shape, some of them eight feet across each face. Maipe looked around, then sat down to wait. After a few minutes Moke's nephew appeared to our left, stringing his net out through the undergrowth as he came.

224 The end of the net stopped a few feet short of the boulders, and Maipe deftly joined it to his net; then, slipping each coil off his shoulder in turn, he hung his own net, fastening it to low branches and saplings. It stretched for about three hundred feet, so that one end was completely out of sight from the other. It stood about four feet high, and Maipe walked the length of it, silently adjusting it so that it touched the ground all the way along and was securely fastened above. If he found the net drooping where there was no support, he cut a sapling, stuck it in the ground and hung the net on it, bending the top sharply back, twisting it around and through the mesh so that the net could not slip. When this was done he took up his spear and casually sharpened it with a stone picked off the ground.

It was about another five minutes before he suddenly stood up and beckoned me to do the same. He stood absolutely motionless, his head slightly on one side, listening; his spear was raised just a few inches from the ground. I listened too, but could hear nothing. The forest had become silent; even the crickets had stopped their almost incessant chirping. Maipe raised his spear higher, and then at some signal that I did not even notice there was a burst of shouting, yelling, hooting and clapping, as the women and children started the beat. They must have been about half a mile away, and as they [136] came closer the noise was deafening. We saw one antelope, a large red sondu, ears back, leaping toward the boulders as though it were heading straight for our net, but at the last moment it saw us and veered away to the left. Maipe could probably have killed it with his spear, but he said, "That is not for us. It will probably fall into Ekianga's net." Just then there was a lot of yelling from Moke's nephew. Maipe vaulted over the net and ran swiftly, leaping and bounding like the sondu to avoid obstacles. I followed as best I could, but was passed by several youngsters from farther down the [136] line before I reached the others. The sondu had gone into Ekianga's

net, just as Maipe had said, but while all the attention was in that 224
direction a water chevrotain, the *sindula*, had tried to fight its way [136]
through Moke's net.

The sindula is one of the most prized animals; it is not much larger than a small dog but is dangerous and vicious. Moke's nephew had been left all by himself to deal with it, as the others in that area were helping Ekianga with the sondu. The youngster, probably not much more than thirteen years old, had speared it with his first thrust, pinning the animal to the ground through the fleshy part of the stomach. But the animal was still very much alive, fighting for freedom. It had already bitten its way through the net, and now it was doubled up, gashing the spear shaft with its sharp teeth. Maipe put another spear into its neck, but it still writhed and fought. Not until a third spear pierced its heart did it give up the struggle.

It was at times like this that I found myself furthest removed [114]
from the Pygmies. They stood around in an excited group, pointing [825]
at the dying animal and laughing. One boy, about nine years old, threw himself on the ground and curled up in a grotesque heap and imitated the sindula's last convulsions. The men pulled their spears out and joked with one another about being afraid of a little animal like that, and to emphasize his point one of them kicked the torn and bleeding body. Then Maipe's mother came and swept the blood-streaked animal up by its hind legs and threw it over her shoulder into the basket on her back.

At other times I have seen Pygmies singeing feathers off birds 825
that were still alive, explaining that the meat is more tender if death [223]
comes slowly. And the hunting dogs, valuable as they are, get kicked [231]
around mercilessly from the day they are born to the day they die. I have never seen any attempt at the domestication of any animal or bird apart from the hunting dog. When I talked to the Pygmies about their treatment of animals, they laughed at me and said, "The forest has given us animals for food—should we refuse this gift and

825 starve?" I thought of turkey farms and Thanksgiving, and of the millions of animals reared by our own society with the sole intention of slaughtering them for food.

224 Ekianga was busy cutting up the sondu by the time I reached his net, for it was too large an animal to fit in his wife's basket. Usually game is brought back to camp before it is divided, and in some groups the dead antelope would have been sent back to camp immediately, around the neck and shoulders of one of the youngsters. But here the womenfolk crowded around as Ekianga hacked away, each claiming her share for her family. "My husband lent you his spear. . . ." "We gave your third wife some liver when she was hungry and you were away. . . ." "My father and yours always hunted side by side. . . ." These were all typical arguments, but for the most part they were not needed. Everyone knew who was entitled to a share, and by and large they stuck to the rules.

224 Above all the clamor, and in the process of re-coiling the nets and
578 assembling for the next cast, a disgruntled Cephu appeared and
156 complained that he had had no luck. He looked enviously at the sondu and the sindula, but nobody offered him a share. Maipe's mother hurriedly covered the chevrotain with leaves to avoid argument. She worked efficiently, not bothering to take the basket off but using her hands behind her back, and bouncing the basket on her buttocks until the dead animal was completely hidden by the leaves.

We went on for a mile or two and made another cast. Once more Cephu was unlucky, and this time he complained even more loudly, accusing the women of deliberately driving the animals away from his nets. They retorted that he had enough of his own womenfolk there, to which he replied rather ungallantly, "That makes no difference, they are a bunch of lazy empty-heads."

224 They were still arguing when they set off for the third cast. I
123 had caught sight of old Moke and stayed behind to talk to him. He

had not left with the hunt but had gone off on his own, as he usually 224
did, with his bow and arrows. I was surprised to see him. He said, 123
"Don't follow them any longer; they will deafen you with their
noise. Cephu will spoil the hunt completely—you'll see." He added
that he had happened to be nearby, waiting for the animals either
to break through the nets or to escape around the edges. He picked [136]
up a large civet cat, the skin slightly stained where it had been
pierced by an arrow. "Not very good for eating," Moke commented, [237]
"but it will make a beautiful hat. Cephu won't get even that—he is [291]
too busy watching other people's nets to watch his own. His is a good
net to stand behind with bow and arrow!" He chuckled to himself
and swung the cat high in the air.

We ambled back slowly, Moke talking away, sometimes to him- 224
self and sometimes to me. On the way he stopped to examine some tracks that were fresh, appearing over the tracks made by the hunters earlier on. He announced that they were made by a large male leopard, and that it was probably watching us from "over there"—waving casually to our right with his bow. Then he moved on in his leisurely way, humming to himself.

Back in the camp I was surprised to find that some of the hunters
were back already, including Maipe. They had taken a short cut,
and traveled twice as fast as Moke and myself. Some of them said
it was because rain had threatened, but others, more bluntly, said
it was because they did not like the noise Cephu was making. There
were a number of women in the camp, and they seemed anxious to
change the subject, so Moke told them about the leopard tracks. 224
They laughed and said what a shock the hunters might get if they 825
came back along that trail. One of them started miming the leopard 536
lying in wait, its eyes staring from that side to this. The others
formed a line and pretended to be the hunters. Every few steps the
"leopard" turned around and jumped up in the air, growling fiercely,
sending its pursuers flying to the protection of the trees.

224 This dance[1] was still in progress when the main body of the hunters
578 returned. They strode into camp with glowering faces and threw
152 their nets on the ground outside their huts. Then they sat down,
156 with their chins in their hands, staring into space and saying nothing.
The women followed, mostly with empty baskets, but they were by no means silent. They swore at each other, they swore at their husbands, and most of all they swore at Cephu. Moke looked across at me and smiled. He was skinning the civet.

I tried to find out what had happened, but nobody would say. Kenge, who had been sleeping, came out of our hut and joined the shouting. He was the only male who was not sitting down, and although he was young he had a powerful voice, and a colorful use of language. I heard him saying, "Cephu is an impotent old fool. No, he isn't, he is an impotent old animal—we have treated him like a man for long enough, now we should treat him like an animal. *Animal!*" He shouted the final epithet across at Cephu's camp, although Cephu had not yet returned.

The result of Kenge's tirade was that everyone calmed down and began criticizing Cephu a little less heatedly, but on every possible score: The way he always built his camp separately, the way he had even referred to it as a separate camp, the way he mistreated his relatives, his general deceitfulness, the dirtiness of his camp, and even his own personal habits.

The rest of the hunters came in shortly afterward, with Cephu leading. He strode across the camp and into his own little clearing
[965] without a word. Ekianga and Manyalibo, who brought up the rear,
sat down at the kumamolimo and announced to the world at large that Cephu had disgraced them all and that they were going to tear down the kumamolimo and abandon the camp and end the molimo. Manyalibo shouted that he wanted everyone to come to the kumamolimo at once, even Cephu. This was a great matter and had to be settled immediately. Kenge, not slow to seize the opportunity

[1] [i.e., the imitation of the leopard--Analyst]

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for reviving his earlier show of wit, relayed Manyalibo's message by 578
standing in midcamp and shouting over in Cephu's direction, 152
"Nyama'e, nyama'e! Pika'i to, nyama UE!" (Animal there! Animal 156
there! Come at once, *you*, you animal!") The youngsters all laughed loudly, but the older men paid no attention. This sent Kenge into a sulk and he started calling us all animals, adding that we were a lot of savages, just like the village people. But now not even the youngsters were listening, for Cephu had appeared.

Trying not to walk too quickly, yet afraid to dawdle too deliberately, he made an awkward entrance. For as good an actor as Cephu it was surprising. By the time he got to the kumamolimo everyone was doing something to occupy himself—staring into the fire or up at the tree tops, roasting plantains, smoking, or whittling away at arrow shafts. Only Ekianga and Manyalibo looked impatient, but they said nothing. Cephu walked into the group, and still nobody spoke. He went up to where a youth was sitting in a chair. Usually he would have been offered a seat without his having to ask, and now he did not dare ask, and the youth continued to sit there in as nonchalant a manner as he could muster. Cephu went to another chair where Amabosu was sitting. He shook it violently when Amabosu ignored him, at which he was told, "Animals lie on the ground."

This was too much for Cephu, and he went into a long diatribe about how he was one of the oldest hunters in the group, and one of the best hunters, and that he thought it was very wrong for everyone to treat him like an animal. Only villagers were like animals. Masisi spoke up in his favor and ordered Amabosu to give up his chair. Amabosu did so with a gesture of contempt and moved over to the far side of the group. Moke was the only one to stay completely apart. He sat outside his hut. He had finished skinning the [231] civet and was twisting strands of vine together to make a frame for the hat. He looked peaceful and contented.

224 765 578 156 Manyalibo stood up and began a rather pompous statement of how everyone wanted this camp to be a good camp, and how everyone wanted the molimo to be a good molimo, with lots of singing, lots of eating, and lots of smoking. But Cephu never took part in the molimo, he pointed out. And Cephu's little group never contributed to the molimo basket. Manyalibo went on, listing the various ways in which Cephu had defaulted and made the camp into a bad camp instead of a good camp, and the molimo a bad molimo. And now, he added, Cephu had made the hunt a bad hunt. He recalled how on the first day, even before the camp was built, we had been presented with an antelope by the forest, but how ever since Cephu had joined us things had gone from bad to worse.

224 765 578 156 593 Cephu tried to interject that the molimo was really none of his business. At this Masisi, who had befriended him over the chair incident, and who had relatives in his camp, rounded on him sharply. He reminded Cephu that he had been glad enough to accept help and food and song when his daughter had died; now that his "mother" had died, why did he reject her? Cephu replied that Balekimito was not his mother. This was what everyone was waiting for. Not only did he name the dead woman, an unheard-of offense, [602] but he denied that she was his mother. Even though there was only [621] the most distant relationship, and that by marriage, it was equivalent to asserting that he did not belong to the same group as Ekianga and Manyalibo and the rest.

578 156 152 224 Ekianga leaped to his feet and brandished his hairy fist across the fire. He said that he hoped Cephu would fall on his spear and kill himself like the animal he was. Who but an animal would steal meat from others? There were cries of rage from everyone, and Cephu 224 578 156 burst into tears. Apparently, during the last cast of the nets Cephu, who had not trapped a single animal the whole day long, had slipped away from the others and set up his net in front of them. In this way

he caught the first of the animals fleeing from the beaters, but he 156 224 578
had not been able to retreat before he was discovered.

I had never heard of this happening before, and it was obviously 224
a serious offense. In a small and tightly knit hunting band, survival 578
can be achieved only by the closest co-operation and by an elaborate 621 476
system of reciprocal obligations which insures that everyone has some
share in the day's catch. Some days one gets more than others, but
nobody ever goes without. There is, as often as not, a great deal of
squabbling over the division of the game, but that is expected, and
nobody tries to take what is not his due.

Cephu tried very weakly to say that he had lost touch with the 224 578
others and was still waiting when he heard the beating begin. It was 156
only then that he had set up his net, where he was. Knowing that 558
nobody believed him, he added that in any case he felt he deserved
a better place in the line of nets. After all, was he not an important
man, a chief, in fact, of his own band? Manyalibo tugged at Ekianga
to sit down, and sitting down himself he said there was obviously no
use prolonging the discussion. Cephu was a big chief, and a chief was [186]
a villager, for the BaMbuti never have chiefs. And Cephu had his [829]
own band, of which he was chief, so let him go with it and hunt
elsewhere and be a chief elsewhere. Manyalibo ended a very eloquent speech with "*Pisa me taba*" ("Pass me the tobacco").

Cephu knew he was defeated and humiliated. Alone, his band 224
of four or five families was too small to make an efficient hunting 156 558
unit. He apologized profusely, reiterated that he really did not know 626
he had set up his net in front of the others, and said that in any
case he would hand over all the meat. This settled the matter, and
accompanied by most of the group he returned to his little camp and
brusquely ordered his wife to hand over the spoils. She had little
chance to refuse, as hands were already reaching into her basket and
under the leaves of the roof where she had hidden some liver in
anticipation of just such a contingency. Even her cooking pot was

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156 emptied. Then each of the other huts was searched and all the meat
558 taken. Cephu's family protested loudly and Cephu tried hard to
626 cry, but this time it was forced and everyone laughed at him. He
clutched his stomach and said he would die; die because he was
hungry and his brothers had taken away all his food; die because he
was not respected.

765 The kumamolimo was festive once again, and the camp seemed
621 restored to good spirits. An hour later, when it was dark and fires
264 were flickering outside every hut, there was a great blaze at the
central hearth and the men talked about the morrow's hunt. From
[201] Cephu's camp came the sound of the old man, still trying hard to
cry, moaning about his unfortunate situation, making noises that
were meant to indicate hunger. From our own camp came the jeers
of women, ridiculing him and imitating his moans.

[602] When Masisi had finished his meal he took a pot full of meat
with mushroom sauce, cooked by his wife, and quietly slipped away
into the shadows in the direction of his unhappy kinsman. The moaning stopped, and when the evening molimo singing was at its height
[516] I saw Cephu in our midst. Like most of us he was sitting on the
[829] ground, in the manner of an animal. But he was singing, and that
meant that he was just as much a BaMbuti as anyone else.

6

The Giver of the Law

CEPHU HAD COMMITTED what is probably one of the most 224
heinous crimes in Pygmy eyes, and one that rarely occurs. Yet the 156
case was settled simply and effectively, without any evident legal 626
system being brought into force. It cannot be said that Cephu went 681
unpunished, because for those few hours when nobody would speak to him he must have suffered the equivalent of as many days solitary confinement for anyone else. To have been refused a chair by a mere youth, not even one of the great hunters; to have been laughed at by women and children; to have been ignored by men—none of these things would be quickly forgotten. Without any formal process of

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626 law Cephu had been firmly put in his place, and it was unlikely he
681 would do the same thing again in a hurry.

181 This was typical of all Pygmy life, on the surface at least. There
was a confusing, seductive informality about everything they did.
[157] Whether it was a birth, a wedding, or a funeral, in a Pygmy hunting
camp or in a Negro village, there was always an unexpectedly casual,
[621] almost carefree attitude. There was, for instance, little apparent spe-
[858] cialization; everyone took part in everything. Children had little or
no voice in adult affairs, but the only adult activities from which they
seemed to be rigidly excluded were certain songs, and of course the
[462] molimo. Between men and women there was also a certain degree of
specialization, but little that could be called exclusive.

621 There were no chiefs, no formal councils. In each aspect of Pygmy
627 life there might be one or two men or women who were more prominent
than others, but usually for good practical reasons. This showed
[69] up most clearly of all in the settling of disputes. There was no judge,
no jury, no court. The Negro tribes all around had their tribunals,
but not the Pygmies. Each dispute was settled as it arose, according to
its nature.

627 Roughly, there were four ways of punishing offenses, each operat-
681 ing as an efficient deterrent but without necessitating any system of outright punishment. In a small and co-operative group no individual would want the job either of passing judgment or of administering punishment, so like everything else in Pygmy life the maintenance of law was a co-operative affair. Certain offenses, rarely committed, were considered so terrible that they would of themselves bring some form of supernatural retribution. Others became the affair of the molimo, which in its morning rampages showed public disapproval by attacking the hut of the culprit, possibly the culprit himself. Both these types of crime were extremely rare. The more serious of the
[685] other crimes, such as theft, were dealt with by a sound thrashing
which was administered co-operatively by all who felt inclined to

participate, but only after the entire camp had been involved in discussing the case. 627 681 Less serious offenses were settled in the simplest way, [685] by the litigants themselves either arguing out the case, or engaging in a mild fight.

I came across only one instance of the first type of crime. We had 684 835 all eaten in the evening and were sitting around our fires. It was with Kenge and a group of the bachelors, talking about something quite trivial, when all of a sudden there was a tremendous wailing and crying from Cephu's camp. A few seconds later there was shouting from the path connecting the two camps and young Kelemoke came rushing through our camp, hotly pursued by other youths who were armed with spears and knives. Everyone ran into the huts and closed the little doorways. The bachelors, however, instead of going in with their families, ran to the nearest trees and climbed up into the lower branches. I followed Kenge up one of the smaller trees and sat among the ants, whose persistent biting I hardly noticed. What was going on below took all my attention.

Kelemoke tried to take refuge in a hut, but he was turned away with angry remarks, and a burning log was thrown after him. Masisi yelled at him to run to the forest. His pursuers were nearly on top of him when they all disappeared at the far end of the camp.

At this point three girls came running out of Cephu's camp, right into the middle of our clearing. They also carried knives—the little [412] paring knives they used for cutting vines and for peeling and shredding roots. They were not only shouting curses against Kelemoke and [152] his immediate family, but they were weeping, with tears streaming down their faces. When they did not find Kelemoke, one of them threw her knife into the ground and started beating herself with her fists, shouting over and over again, "He has killed me, he has killed me!" After a pause for breath she added, "I shall never be able to live again!" Kenge made a caustic comment on the logic of the statement, from the safety of his branch, and immediately the girls turned

684 835 [152] their attention to our tree and began to threaten us. They called us all manner of names, and then they fell on the ground and rolled over and over, beating themselves, tearing their hair, and wailing loudly.

Just then there came more shouts from two directions. One set was from the youths who had evidently found Kelemoke hiding just outside the camp. At this the girls leaped up and, brandishing their knives, set off to join the pursuit. The other shouts, for the first time from adult men and women, came from the camp of Cephu. I could not make out what they were about, but I could see the glow of flames.

I asked Kenge what had happened. He looked very grave now and said that it was the greatest shame that could befall a Pygmy—Kelemoke had committed incest. In some African tribes it is actually preferred that cousins should marry each other, but among the BaMbuti this was considered almost as incestuous as sleeping with a brother or sister. I asked Kenge if they would kill Kelemoke if they found him, but Kenge said they would not find him.

684 835 627 [153] "He has been driven to the forest," he said, "and he will have to live there alone. Nobody will accept him into their group after what he has done. And he will die, because one cannot live alone in the forest. The forest will kill him. And if it does not kill him he will die of leprosy." Then, in typical Pygmy fashion, he burst into smothered laughter, clapped his hands and said, "He has been doing it for months; he must have been very stupid to let himself be caught. No wonder they chased him into the forest." To Kenge, evidently, the greater crime was Kelemoke's stupidity in being found out.

All the doors to the huts still remained tight shut. Njobo and Moke had both been called on by the youths to show themselves and settle the matter, but they had both refused to leave their huts, leaving Kelemoke to his fate. Now there was an even greater uproar over in Cephu's camp, and Kenge and I decided to climb down from the tree and see what was going on.

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One of the huts was in flames, and people were standing all 684
around, either crying or shouting. There was a lot of struggling going 835
on among a small group of men, and women were brandishing 627
fists in each other's faces. We decided to go back to the main camp,
which by then was filled with clusters of men and women standing
about discussing the affair. Not long afterward a contingent from
Cephu's group came over. They swore at the children, who, delighted [857]
by the whole thing, were imitating the epic flight and pursuit of
Kelemoke. The adults, in no joking frame of mind, sat down to have
a discussion. But the talking did not center around Kelemoke's act
so much as around the burning of the hut. Almost everyone seemed
to dismiss the act of incest. One of Kelemoke's uncles, Masalito,
with whom he had been staying since his father died, had great tears
rolling down his cheeks. He said, "Kelemoke only did what any
youth would do, and he has been caught and driven to the forest.
The forest will kill him. That is finished. But my own brother has [593]
burned down my hut and I have nowhere to sleep. I shall be cold.
And what if it rains? I shall die of cold and rain at the hands of my
brother."

The brother, Aberi, instead of taking up the point that Kelemoke 835
had dishonored his daughter, made a feeble protestation that he had 684
been insulted. Kelemoke should have taken more care. And Masalito 578
should have taught him better. This started the argument off on 602 [861]
different lines, and both families quarreled bitterly, accusing each [593]
other for more than an hour. Then the elders began to yawn and say
they were tired; they wanted to go to sleep; we would settle it the
next day.

For a long time that night the camp was alive with whispered 835
remarks, and not a few rude jokes were thrown about from one hut 684
to another. The next day I went over to Cephu's camp and found [602]
the girl's mother busy helping to rebuild Masalito's hut; the two
men were sitting down and talking as though nothing much had
happened.

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684 happened. All the youths told me not to worry about Kelemoke, that they were secretly bringing him food in the forest, he was not far away.

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626 Three days later, when the hunt returned in the late afternoon, Kelemoke came wandering idly into the camp behind them, as though he too had been hunting. He looked around cautiously, but nobody said a word or even looked at him. If they ignored him, at least they did not curse him. He came over to the bachelor's fire and sat down. For several minutes the conversation continued as though he were not there. I saw his face twitching, but he was too proud to speak first. Then a small child was sent over by her mother with a bowl of food, which she put in Kelemoke's hands and gave him a shy, friendly smile.

554 Kelemoke never flirted with his cousin again, and now, five years later, he is happily married and has two fine children. He does not have leprosy, and he is one of the best liked and most respected of the hunters.

626 I have never heard of anyone being completely ostracized, but the threat is always there, and is usually sufficient to insure good behavior. The two attitudes which disturb the Pygmy most are contempt and ridicule. Contempt is most effectively shown by ignoring someone, even if he comes and sits at the same fire. But it is difficult to maintain for long because hunters cannot afford to ignore a fellow hunter. So ostracism of this kind is infrequent and does not last. Almost as effective, and of much longer duration, is ridicule. The
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522 BaMbuti are good-natured people with an irresistible sense of humor; they are always making jokes about one another, even about themselves, but their humor can be turned into an instrument of punishment when they choose.

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578 Such a case was a great fight between the same two brothers who had fallen out over Kelemoke's misdemeanors, Aberi and Masalito.

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This incident shows as well as any how a tiny, and often imagined, 593
insult can be magnified out of all proportion until it becomes a serious 578
issue, threatening the peace of the camp. In any small, closed community, there are hidden tensions everlastingly at play. They are capricious, they are fluctuating and vapid, but every one of them is potentially explosive.

Of the two brothers Aberi was the elder. He was aggressive and 593
ugly, and he considered himself the head of the family. The oldest 578
brother, Kelemoke's father, had died. But Kelemoke had been 554 157
brought up by Masalito rather than Aberi because everyone agreed
that Masalito, if younger, had much more sense. He was also a better
hunter, a better singer, a better dancer, and considerably better-looking. He had a prettier wife too; Aberi's wife had lost half her face, [164]
which had been eaten away by yaws. So between these two brothers
there were always strained feelings. Open conflict was avoided because
Masalito usually lived with the main group, of which his wife was a
member, while Aberi always hunted with Cephu, his cousin.

But Masalito was kindly and liked peace and quiet, so when Cephu
joined the main group at Apa Lelo he often used to visit his brother
in Cephu's camp. Aberi's wife was a hard-working woman, and
although it was difficult to look at her without flinching, she was loved
by everyone. One afternoon, on a rainy day, Masalito wandered over
to visit his brother. Rainy days are not happy days in a hunting camp;
they are often oppressive, and of course hunting is impossible. People
are couped up in their tiny leaf huts, thinking of all the game that
is going uncaught. Aberi was sleeping, so Masalito sat down beside 578
his sister-in-law, Tamasa, and asked her for a smoke. She passed him 607
the clay pipe bowl and a little tobacco, and a long stem cut freshly 276
from the center of a plantain leaf. She had recently come back from a 576
visit to a Negro village and had brought several of these stems with
her, as they give by far the best smoke.

Masalito smoked a few puffs, then passed the pipe to Tamasa. But

578 instead of accepting it she abruptly turned it upside down and
607 knocked the remaining tobacco out into the dirt. This was not only
276 wasteful, but a deliberate insult. Masalito did not want to take
576 offense, so he gave Tamasa the chance to re-establish good relations.
He asked her to give him one of the new pipestems to take back to his hut for himself and his wife to enjoy. To refuse her husband's brother would be an open act of aggression quite uncalled for, and if she made the gift she would automatically cancel the previous insult. Masalito thought that he had not only maneuvered the political situation to his advantage but also won for himself and his wife a new pipestem. Unfortunately he had chosen a bad day.

[422] Tamasa felt that Masalito was trying to get the better of her, and to get her to give away her husband's property while he was asleep, without asking him. She said, "Certainly I will give you a pipestem." Then she went behind the hut, where all the rubbish was thrown, and came back with a withered and smelly stump of a pipe. It had been pared away so often between smokes, to keep the mouthpiece fresh, that it was now only two feet long instead of six or seven. And instead of being fresh and green and juicy it was stale and brown and dry, reeking of old tobacco and spittle. This she presented to
[152] Masalito, who was so upset that he cried with rage, and asked why she and Aberi always treated him so badly. Tamasa promptly retorted that it was not bad treatment to feed him and give him tobacco every time he came over from his camp. Didn't his wife look after him, that he had to come and scrounge from his brother?

[152] This was too much for Masalito, who had wanted only to be on good terms with everyone. He called Tamasa a name that one should
593 never use to one's brother's wife, and Tamasa started crying. This
578 awakened Aberi, who came out of his hut sleepily, looking uglier
276 than ever. Without trying to explain, Masalito, still sobbing tear-
152 lessly with rage, hit his brother over the head with the withered pipestem Tamasa had given him. Brandishing the offending article above

his head he stalked back to the main camp shouting at the top of 593
his voice what miserable wretches his brother and his sister-in-law 578
were. The dirty old pipe was damning evidence, and all sympathy 276
was with Masalito. Njobo's wife took her husband's pipestem and 152
gave it to Masalito, who quickly regained his good humor. But by now Aberi was aroused, and came storming into the camp, saying that his brother had insulted Tamasa. He declared that it was a matter for serious action; Masalito should be thrashed.

Everybody thought this was a great joke, and burst into laughter Only children and youths get thrashed, and Masalito was a father. Aberi did not like being laughed at and he went over to where Masalito was sitting down on a log, smoking his new pipe. He demanded an apology. Masalito, now completely composed, simply picked up the old pipestem and threw it at his brother's feet, saying, "There! That is for her!" By now a crowd had gathered around, and the hotter Aberi became the more relaxed Masalito seemed to be.

Aberi shook his fists and said that if nobody else was going to 593
thrash Masalito he was. This brought more laughs as Aberi was posi- 578
tively puny beside Masalito, who himself was little more than four 152
feet tall. Masalito invited his brother to come and try. Aberi then [041]
pretended that he was holding a spear, and in a high-pitched voice, squeaking with anger, he cried out, "I am going to get my spear and I am going to kill you completely!" Whereupon he imitated a spear thrust in Masalito's direction. There was a gasp of horror, as this is something one does not say to one's brother even in jest. But Masalito replied calmly, "Go and get your spear, then, and come back and kill me. I'll still be here. You don't have the courage to kill your brother." He said a lot of other things, goading Aberi on to an even
higher pitch of fury. Aberi tried to make himself more impressive by [536]
a graphic dance, which was meant to show exactly how he was going to leap in the air and twist around and drive the spear home. But he

593 578 152 was not a good dancer, and when he tried to illustrate the leap he fell flat on his face.

[536] That was the end of the matter for Aberi. For weeks he was ridiculed, everyone asking him if he had lost his spear, or telling him to be careful not to trip and fall. But it was not quite the end of the matter for Masalito. He felt more angry than ever at his brother, because Aberi had made himself, and so the whole family, an object of ridicule. Masalito felt this an added insult to himself. Even Kelemoke was furious. So relations between the two brothers got worse and worse, and every time there was a silence in the camp Masalito would complain in a loud voice about his brother and his brother's wife.

593 578 152 621 626 689 At first this was tolerated, but finally it threatened to split the camp in two. Masalito began naming all his friends and relatives to support him in ignoring Aberi; he refused to say a word to his brother. Of course his brother could claim support from the same relatives and friends, and tension was spreading throughout both camps. That was when the molimo stepped in and showed public disapproval of Masalito. The original source of the dispute, and Aberi's undoubted wrongdoing, were forgotten. Masalito was guilty of the much more serious crime of splitting the hunting band into opposing factions. He himself was then ridiculed and shamed into silence. After that it was only one or two days before the two brothers became good friends and hunting companions once again.

578 626 576 836 Disputes were generally settled with little reference to the alleged rights and wrongs of the case, but chiefly with the intention of restoring peace to the community. One night Kenge slipped out of our hut on an amorous expedition to the hut of Manyalibo, who had an [152] attractive daughter, one of Kenge's many admirers. Shortly afterward there was a howl of rage and Kenge came flying back across the

clearing with a furious Manyalibo hurling sticks and stones after him. 578 626
Manyalibo then took up a position in the middle of the clearing and 576 836.
woke the whole camp up, calling out in a loud voice and denouncing [152]
Kenge as an incestuous good-for-nothing. Actually Kenge was only very distantly related to the girl, and the flirtation was not at all out of order, though marriage might have been. Several people tried to point this out to Manyalibo, but he became increasingly vociferous. He said that it wasn't so much that Kenge had tried to sleep with his daughter, but that he had been brazen enough to crawl right over her sleeping father to get at her, waking him up in the process. This was a considered insult, for any decent youth would have made a prior arrangement to meet his girl elsewhere. He called on Kenge to justify himself. But Kenge was too busy laughing and only managed to call out "You are making too much noise!" This seemed a poor defense, but in fact it was not. Manyalibo set up another hue and cry about Kenge's general immorality and disrespect for his elders, and strode up and down the camp rattling on the roofs of huts to call everyone to his defense.

Moke took the place in the center of the camp where Manyalibo 578
had stood, and where everyone stands who wants to address the whole 626
camp formally. He gave a low whistle, like the whistle given on the 554
hunt to call for silence. When everyone was quiet he told Manyalibo that the noise was giving him a headache, and he wanted to sleep. Manyalibo retorted that this matter was more serious than Moke's sleep. Moke replied in a very deliberate, quiet voice, "You are making too much noise—you are killing the forest, you are killing the hunt. It is for us older men to sleep at night and not to worry about the youngsters. They know what to do and what not to do." Manyalibo growled with dissatisfaction, but he went back to his hut, taunted by well-directed remarks from Kenge and his friends.

Whether Kenge had done something wrong or not was relatively 578
immaterial. Manyalibo had done the greater wrong by waking the 689

578 whole camp and by making so much noise that all the animals would
689 be frightened away, spoiling the next day's hunting. The Pygmies
have a saying that a noisy camp is a hungry camp.

685 Some misdemeanors are very simply dealt with. A Pygmy thinks
[186] nothing of stealing from Negroes; they are, after all, only animals,
as seen by Pygmy eyes. But among themselves theft is virtually nonexistent. For one thing, they have few possessions, and for another there is no necessity for theft except through laziness.

685 Pepei was such a lazy Pygmy, and he was always stealing from
159 the Negroes. But out in the forest he was forced to work for his food,
[589] to build his own hut if he wanted one (he was a bachelor but liked
having his own hut, sharing it with his younger brother), and he had to make his own bows and arrows and hunting net, and to cook his own food. This was hard on Pepei, and although he meant no harm he could not resist slipping around the camp at night, taking a leaf from this hut and a leaf from that, until he had enough to thatch his own hut—which he made by acquiring saplings in a similar manner. Food used to disappear mysteriously, and Pepei had always seen a dog stealing it. But finally he was caught in the act by old Sau, Amabosu's mother, who was a very strange and frightening old lady. Pepei crept into her hut one night and was lifting the lid of a pot when she smacked him hard on the wrist with a wooden pestle. She then grabbed him by the arm, twisting it behind his back, and forced him out into the open.

Nobody really minded Pepei's stealing, because he was a born comic and a great storyteller. But he had gone too far in stealing from old Sau, who had lost her husband and was supported by her son
685 Amabosu and his wife. So the men ran out of their huts angrily and
159 held Pepei, while the youths broke off thorny branches and whipped
627 him until he managed to break away. He went running as fast as
he could into the forest; he cried bitterly and wrapped his arms around

himself for comfort. He stayed in the forest for nearly twenty-four 685
hours, and when he came back the next night he went straight to 159
his hut, unseen, and lay down to sleep. His hut was between mine 627
and Sau's, and I heard him come in, and I heard him crying softly [752]
because even his brother wouldn't speak to him.

The next day Pepei was his old self, and everyone was glad to see him laughing; they were happy to be able to listen to his jokes, and they all gave him food so that he wouldn't have to steal again.

But sometimes a dispute cannot be settled in any of these ways. It 578
blows up too quickly to be ended by ridicule; the participants are
too old to be thrashed; yet it is not serious enough to merit ostracism.
Such disputes are usually trivial in origin, and often arise from the
confined and close conditions of living. Personal relations become very 578
involved in a hunting group, particularly when both members of a 583
sister-exchange marriage are living in the same group.

Under this system, when a boy chooses a wife he becomes obliged to find a "sister"—actually any girl relative—to offer in exchange to his bride's family for one of their bachelor sons. This can be quite a chore, as it may be difficult to find a "sister" who is willing to marry the youth his in-laws have in mind as a groom, and whom the groom himself will also like.

Amabosu had married Ekianga's sister, and Ekianga had married, 593
as his third wife, Amabosu's sister, the beautiful Kamaikan. He had 595
578
just had a child by her, while Amabosu was still childless. Since 853
Kamaikan was nursing a child, Ekianga was under an obligation not 607
to sleep with her, and his two other wives were happy that at last they [583]
could expect him to pay them some attention. But to everyone's dismay he continued to sleep with Kamaikan. And one day Amabosu started making loud remarks across the camp about his sister's health.

This was not at Apa Lelo, but at a later camp, Apa Kadiketu. Amabosu's hut was to my right, and it faced directly across toward

607 593 595 853 578 [252]

the first of Ekianga's huts, the largest and the best, built by himself and Kamaikan. Amabosu was sitting down at his fire at the time, and his wife was sitting near him, peeling mushrooms for the evening meal. Ekianga was inside the hut with Kamaikan, who had given the baby to her old mother, Sau, to look after for a few hours. At first Amabosu's remarks brought no response from the closed hut. But he became more and more explicit, denouncing Ekianga's shame in considerable and intimate detail, hinting that what was going on inside the hut at that moment was precisely what every new mother should avoid if she was to be able to look after the baby properly and give it lots of milk.

593 595 411 578 607

At last Ekianga retorted angrily from inside the hut. Amabosu continued to sit quietly, staring into the fire, with his wide, strange eyes. He answered in as caustic tones as he could find. In the end, Ekianga's door burst open and Ekianga appeared, spear in hand. He looked wild with fury and shame, and he flexed his muscles and hurled the spear at Amabosu with all his might. Amabosu looked up from the fire for the first time, but sat perfectly still with not a flicker of emotion on his face, his eyes still wide and cold and staring. The spear struck the ground within twelve inches of his feet, which was probably exactly where it had been intended to land. Amabosu calmly rose, pulled the spear free, and tossed it behind his hut into the rubbish dump. This was just about as insulting a gesture as he could have made at that moment, and it started one of the most dramatic fights I have seen in a Pygmy camp, and one of the most complicated.

593 595 578 607

As long as it was between the two men all was well, but the wives were torn between their loyalties as wives and as sisters. Amabosu's wife entered the fray by swearing at her husband for throwing her brother's spear into the rubbish dump. Amabosu countered by smacking her firmly across the face. Normally Ekianga would have approved of such manly assertion of authority over a disloyal wife, but as

the wife was his sister he retaliated by going into his hut and dragging 593
out Kamaikan, whom he in turn publicly smacked across *her* face. 595
Kamaikan was made of tough stock. She picked up a log from the 578
fire and beat her husband over the back with it. It is difficult to 607
remember just exactly what the sequence of events was after that.

The two wives began fighting tooth and nail, quite literally. The men battled with burning logs, three or four feet long, swinging them from the cool end, but always just missing each other. Every now and again one of the girls would break free and go to the assistance of her brother, and the other would run and pull her away.

As always, a large crowd gathered—men, women and children. But nobody volunteered to stop the fight or to adjudicate in any way. They took one side or the other, either according to the rights and wrongs of the issue, or merely on the grounds that one or the other was the better fighter and more likely to win. The general opinion [853]
was that Ekianga should certainly not be sleeping with Kamaikan while she was nursing a baby, but since Kamaikan was equally at fault, Amabosu was wrong in defending her. By and large, however, the onlookers were more interested in the fight than the issue at stake.

As the fight grew more serious, and some visible damage was being done to all four parties, first relatives and then friends began to take sides more vigorously, and it looked as though fighting were going to break out all over the camp. At that moment Arobanai, Ekianga's senior wife, came striding out of her hut and announced in her deep contralto voice that she couldn't rest with all this noise going on, so it would have to stop. To make her impartiality quite plain she added that her animal of a husband could sleep with anyone he wanted to as far as she was concerned. She then went to where the two girls were locked together, both looking very much the worse for wear. She pulled them apart, and having given Amabosu's wife a hefty kick she took Kamaikan tenderly and led her back to her own hut.

593 At this, old Sau, who had been sitting on the ground throughout,
595 with Kamaikan's baby on her lap, handed the baby to her weeping
598 daughter-in-law and slowly got to her feet. Her son and Ekianga
606 were now both armed with stout sticks, about four inches thick and
607 three feet long, and they were lashing out with no reservations.
887 Sau hobbled up to them and calmly pushed her way between; then she turned and put her head against Ekianga's stomach and her backside against her son's legs, and forced them apart. They continued trying to fight each other around the old lady, reaching out far so as not to hit her, but it was just too difficult. Ekianga was the first to throw away his weapon, which he did over Sau's head, with all his might. But Amabosu ducked and it missed him. Amabosu then threw his club on the ground and led his mother back to his hut. His wife meanwhile had been joined by Kamaikan, and they both were playing happily with the baby.

621 This incident illustrates one of the most remarkable features of
626 Pygmy life—the way everything settles itself with apparent lack
578 of organization. Co-operation is the key to Pygmy society; you can
181 expect it and you can demand it, and you have to give it. If your wife nags you at night so that you cannot sleep, you merely have to raise your voice and call on your friends and relatives to help you. Your wife will do the same, so whether you like it or not the whole camp becomes involved. At this point someone—very often an older person with too many relatives and friends to be accused of being partisan—steps in with the familiar remark that everyone is making too much noise, or else diverts the issue onto a totally different track so that people forget the origin of the argument and give it up.

621 Issues other than disputes are settled the same way, without leader-
626 ship appearing from any particular individual. If it is a matter involv-
578 ing the hunt, every adult male discusses it until there is agreement.

THE GIVER OF THE LAW

The women can throw in their opinions, particularly if they know 621 626
that the area the men have selected is barren of vegetable foods. But 578
the men usually know this anyway.

If the question is one of marriage, and a father announces that he 626
does not like the girl his son has chosen, his son can call on all his 593
friends to help him. If he is strong and holds out, the whole group 584
will be assembled to discuss the case. If they agree with the father, then either the boy has to give up his talk of matrimony or else make up his mind to marry the girl anyway. In the latter case he would probably go and live with her hunting group. But it is seldom that things come to such a pass.

In fact, Pygmies dislike and avoid personal authority, though they 626
are by no means devoid of a sense of responsibility. It is rather that 157
they think of responsibility as communal. If you ask a father, or a 181
husband, why he allows his son to flirt with a married girl, or his wife to flirt with other men, he will answer, "It is not my affair," and he is right. It is *their* affair, and the affair of the other men and women, and of their brothers and sisters. He will try to settle it himself, either by argument or by a good beating, but if this fails he brings everyone else into the dispute so that he is absolved of personal responsibility.

If you ask a Pygmy why his people have no chiefs, no lawgivers, 621
no councils, or no leaders, he will answer with misleading simplicity, 829
"Because we are the people of the forest." The forest, the great provider, 778
is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the lawgiver, the leader, and the final arbitrator.

7

The Play World of the BaMbuti

181 IN THE FOREST life appears to be free and easy, happy-go-lucky, with a certain amount of perpetual disorder as a result. But in fact, beneath all that there *is* order and reason; reaching everywhere is the firm, controlling hand of the forest itself.

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601 If individual responsibility and authority are shunned and dispersed in other aspects of Pygmy life, as in the maintenance of law and order, a similar pattern appears in the upbringing of children. It is no accident that a child calls everyone in the same age group as his parents "father" or "mother"; those still older are called "grandparent." Those of the same age as himself he refers to by a

861
term which could be translated as either "brother" or "sister," and 561 601 anyone younger is "child," though more often they are just called by name. In this way a Pygmy camp is much less formal than most [621] African societies, where there are not only different terms of address and reference for different degrees of relationship, but also correspondingly different modes of behavior that are enforced at all times.

During the day one Pygmy camp looks much like another. The 000 sun filters down through the trees and brightens the camp with shafts of spiraling light as it catches the columns of smoke drifting lazily upward. This is what makes a camp look so full of life at midday, [512] even when most people are out on the hunt and those that have stayed behind are dozing in the shade of their little leaf huts. The light has a life of its own, and after it has danced down the coils of blue smoke it seems to leap from place to place on the leafy floor of the camp as the trees sway in the breeze high above. And when you listen you hear life in myriad forms all around—birds, monkeys, bees; the rustling of a nearby stream and the never-ending voice of the forest itself. It continually whispers assurances that all is well, that the forest is looking after its children.

In a village the heat of day is unbearably, suffocatingly oppressive, 512 513 but in the forest it is just warm enough to make you want to stretch 132 out and bask in the dancing, shady sunlight, like other living creatures. But the Pygmies have learned from the animals around them to doze 512 with one eye open, and a sleepy midday camp can become filled in 513 854 a minute with shouts and yells and tearful protestations as a baby, crawling around this warm, friendly world, gets into a bed of hot ashes, or a column of army ants. In a moment he will be surrounded by angry adults and given a sound slapping, then carried unceremoniously back to the safety of a hut. It does not matter much which 854 hut, because as far as the child is concerned all adults are his parents 861 or grandparents. They are all equally likely to slap him for doing 867

854 wrong, or fondle him and feed him with delicacies if he is quiet and
861 gives them no trouble. He knows his real mother and father, of
867 course, and has a special affection for them and they for him, but
from an early age he learns that he is the child of them all, for they
are all children of the forest.

857 When a hunting party goes off there are always people left in the
[512] camp—usually some of the older men and women, some children,
and perhaps one or two younger men and women. The children
[367] always have their own playground, called *bopi,* a few yards off from
[192] the main camp. At Apa Lelo it was on the shore where the river twisted around an island and one branch of it cut in almost between Cephu's camp and the main camp. The water was fairly shallow there, and all day long the children splashed and wallowed about to their heart's content. If they tired of that, they had a couple of vine swings in their bopi; one was a small one for younger children, and the other was hung from two tall trees. Infants watched with envy as the older children swung wildly about, climbing high up on the vine strands and performing all sorts of acrobatics.

There were always trees for the youngsters to climb, and this is one of the main sports even for those not yet old enough to walk properly. The great game is for half a dozen or more children to climb to the top of a young tree, bending it down until its top touches the ground. Then they all leap off at once, and if anyone is too slow he goes flying back upward as the tree springs upright, to the jeers and laughter of his friends.

861 Like children everywhere, Pygmy children love to imitate their
868 adult idols. This is the beginning of their schooling, for the adults
will always encourage and help them. What else is there for them to
[524] learn except to grow into good adults? So a fond father will make a
tiny bow for his son, and arrows of soft wood with blunt points. He
[285] may also give him a strip of a hunting net. A mother will delight
000 herself and her daughter by weaving a miniature carrying basket. At

THE PLAY WORLD OF THE BAMBUTI

857 At an early age boys and girls are "playing house." They solemnly collect the sticks and leaves, and while the girl is building a miniature house the boy prowls around with his bow and arrow. He will eventually find a stray plantain or an ear of corn which he will shoot at and proudly carry back. With equal solemnity it is cooked and eaten, and the two may even sleep the sleep of innocence in the hut they have made.

857 224 [887] [603] They will also play at hunting, the boys stretching out their little bits of net while the girls beat the ground with bunches of leaves and drive some poor tired old frog in toward the boys. If they can't find a frog they go and awaken one of their grandparents and ask him to play at being an antelope. He is then pursued all over the camp, twisting and dodging among the huts and the trees, until finally the young hunters trap their quarry in the net, and with shouts of delight pounce on him, beating him lovingly with their little fists. Then they roll over and over in a tangle with the net until they are exhausted.

861 857 For children, life is one long frolic interspersed with a healthy sprinkle of spankings and slappings. Sometimes these seem unduly severe, but it is all part of their training. And one day they find that the games they have been playing are not games any longer, but the real thing, for they have become adults. Their hunting is now real hunting; their tree climbing is in earnest search of inaccessible honey; their acrobatics on the swings are repeated almost daily, in other forms, in the pursuit of elusive game, or in avoiding the malicious forest buffalo. It happens so gradually that they hardly notice the change at first, for even when they are proud and famous hunters their life is still full of fun and laughter.

512 While the children are playing about in their bopi, safely out of the way, yet close enough not to be able to fall into any real danger,

512 the others who have stayed behind from the hunt have any number of ways of occupying themselves, if they do not want to sleep.

The first time I ever visited a hunting camp I heard its many sounds some fifteen minutes before I finally walked into the clearing. First I heard a sharp, hollow, tapping sound. Then the whole orchestra of children's voices, loudly gossiping women and chattering men blended with the hammering and occasional shouting and snatches of song. In the camp there was only a handful of people; but they were all busy, and when Pygmies are busy they are noisy.

287 A youth was standing beside a fallen tree trunk, pounding away
[237] at a narrow strip of bark with the end of an elephant tusk, hafted
[412] simply into a wooden handle. He was making the bark cloth that is the main clothing of the Pygmies. Although more and more of the men are getting used to the European-style clothes of the villagers, in the forest they still prefer bark cloth, which is easy to make and costs nothing. There are several vines that yield a suitable bark. After a strip has been cut it is laid over an outstretched leg while the artisan chops casually away at it, removing the outer bark. Then it is either
[386] soaked in water or mud, the mud giving it a bluish color, or softened by smoking it over a fire. After that it is spread over a fallen tree trunk and beaten with an ivory tusk. It spreads out into a soft, supple cloth, the texture varying with the type of bark.

386 There are many fashions in bark cloth, not only in the choice of
287 a particular bark, but in the way it is dyed or decorated, and also in
462 the way it is worn. The women nearly always do the decorating, using *nkula* bark to make a red paste, or the gardenia fruit, *kangay*, for black dye. On certain barks the juice of a citrous fruit stains the
[516] material blue. As often as you see a man making cloth you will see a woman sitting down, legs straight out in front, as always. Her simple tools lie around her, and the bark cloth is spread over her thighs. If she is using the red nkula, first of all she has to rub two pieces of the wood together, with a little water to turn the powder

into paste. Then, using a finger, she daubs the fresh cloth, which 386
may be white, fawn, brown, or blue, with bright splotches of red. 287
If she is using the fruit juice she carefully collects it in a cup made 462
from the hard shell of some forest fruit, and with little twigs she draws fanciful patterns of straight lines, crisscrossing the cloth with unconventional Pygmy geometry. When the cloth is finished she throws it over the roof of her hut to dry, and looks around for something else to do.

Women usually work in twos or threes for company, and nearby 283
a friend will be attending to some other womanly task. They spend 294
hours at a time making the elaborate belts which hold the bark cloth
in place. The material culture of the BaMbuti is minimal, and simplicity [511]
and utility are usually the main characteristics. But there is nothing simple about the belts they make. A single belt takes several weeks. First the vine has to be collected, dried, and shredded. Then the strands are tied around a stout twig in the ground. The woman holds the stick firmly between her toes and pulls a number of the strands to form the core around which she braids an outer binding. There may be as many as two hundred braided lengths to a single belt, bound decoratively in the center. Each end is worked into ties for fastening the belt tightly so that it will not only hold the bark cloth in place but also support knives, machettis, and the bundles of roots and other things that Pygmies tie to their belts while on the trail, to leave their hands and arms free.

The same vine, nkusa, is used for making hunting nets. After it 286
has been shredded it is deftly rolled on the thigh, one strand being rolled into the end of the next so that when two strands are twined together a woman can present her husband with a length of stout cord long enough to add several feet to the family hunting net. Netmaking is virtually a full-time occupation, and one in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the
inclination. Few occupations are strictly reserved for either men or [462]

286 women, and although a man will attend to his own net, repairing it
[462] and adding to it, a mother will often make a complete hunting net
to present to her son when he gets married.

342 The other major activity that goes on almost every day in any
356 Pygmy camp is the repairing and alteration of the huts. New leaves have to be added, or the old ones changed to avoid leaks. If relatives come to visit, either the house has to be enlarged or a new one built. Whenever this happens there are repercussions throughout the camp, since people will have to change the entrances to their huts to avoid
342 looking directly into the stranger's hut. The entrances also get changed
356 if there are arguments between two families. The two disputants,
578 though they may be next door to each other, will build little "spite fences" between them, so that their huts are turned almost back to back, the walls in effect turning the doorways to face in opposite directions. Then the doorway may face into someone else's hut, and if that family is not in sympathy, their doorway in turn will be changed, and so on.

342 These changes are usually made by the women, since the hut is
462 considered the woman's property. This is one of the strongest points
593 a woman has in arguments with her husband. I have seen a woman
[356] who has failed to get anywhere in a matrimonial disagreement simply
[423] turn around and start methodically pulling all the leaves off the hut. Usually the husband stops her halfway. In this case, however, the husband was particularly stubborn. He waited until she had taken all the leaves off, then remarked to the camp at large that his wife was going to be dreadfully cold that night. There was nothing for her to do, without losing face, but to continue; so reluctantly, and very slowly, she started to pull out the sticks that formed the framework of her home.

By this time the camp was agog, because it had been a long time since anyone had seen a domestic argument carried quite this far. The poor woman was in tears, for she was very much in love with her

husband, and the final step, if he did not stop her, was for her to 342
pack her few belongings and walk off, having completely demolished 462
their home first. Then she would return to the home of her parents. 593
It is the nature of a Pygmy never to admit he is wrong, and the husband was beginning to feel equally anxious. Things had gone too far for either of them to patch up the quarrel without being shamed in the eyes of all those who were watching to see what would happen next. He sat silent, hugging his knees, looking as miserable as his wife. Then he brightened up suddenly and turned around to see how far the demolition had gone. Only a few sticks had been pulled out. He called to his wife not to bother with the sticks, it was only the leaves that were dirty. She looked at him with a puzzled [201]
"*Ayiiiiii?*"—and then, understanding, asked him to help her carry the leaves down to the stream. This they did, and together they gravely washed every single leaf and brought them back. While she joyfully put the leaves back on the hut he stoked up the fire and then went off with his bow and arrows to see if he could find some game to bring back for a special dinner.

The pretense was that she had been taking the leaves off not because she was angry, but because they were dirty and attracted ants and spiders. Nobody believed this, but everyone was glad the quarrel was over. For several days women talked politely about the insects in the leaves of their huts, and took a few leaves down to the stream to wash, as if this was a perfectly normal procedure. I have never seen it done before or since.

But apart from little excitements of this kind during the day, the 512
camp really comes to life only when the hunt returns. Long before 224
the first hunter appears the whole camp knows exactly who has caught 202
what. They know partly by listening for the shouts and arm-claps of the returning hunters, which they can hear from a considerable distance, and partly because throughout the day children come and

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

512 224 [202] go between the camp and the hunt, if they are not too far apart, bringing news to and fro.

As soon as the hunters return they deposit the meat on the ground, and the camp gathers to make sure the division is fair. Nobody acknowledges that it is, but in the end everyone is satisfied. Cooking operations start at once and within an hour everyone is eating. If the [535] hunt has been a good one, and the day is still young, the most energetic men and women dance immediately afterward, followed by the children. In the course of such a dance they imitate, with suitable exaggeration, the events of the day. If the hunt has not been so good, or a man is tired and does not feel like dancing, he will sit down and gather his family around him and tell them something that has happened to him on the hunt, something wonderful and exciting, but which naturally happened while nobody else was looking.

538 [157] Since Pygmies are blessed with a lively imagination, these stories grow until it is difficult to tell the difference between what is meant to be a straight, factual account and a traditional legend. And there is always the element of the two-way process in which fact becomes legend, and legend becomes accepted, through constant repetition, as fact.

The dream world of the Pygmies is a very real one, full of hidden meaning and significance. There is one story that Cephu is still fond of telling, and he still tells it in almost exactly the same way as he did six years earlier when I first heard it.

538 439 177 He had been into the village for a short visit, and we all knew he had gone empty-handed. Yet when he returned a few days later he brought a sizable load of plantains and rice with him. Everyone asked him who he had stolen it from. Cephu, with a great smile spreading across his face, sat down and waited for his audience to settle down. With his wife and his children close behind him, and his friends all around, Cephu sat simply on the ground in his most charming and bewitching way, old rascal that he was, even then. He looked up

at the trees and opened his arms and raised his expressive hands 538
upward. He began telling the story in his beautiful rich voice, the 439
seriousness of what he was saying belied only by the smile that lurked 177
in the depths of his shining brown eyes.

"I am only a poor BaMbuti; the forest is my father and my mother. But my Negro master had asked me to bring him some meat." So Cephu started, self-deprecating, using the term for his patron in the sense in which only the Negroes use it, as indicating ownership. The Pygmies accept this assumption of superiority outwardly, because it pays—as the story went on to show.

"My master asked me for meat, so I hunted and I hunted and [224]
I hunted, and I caught sondu and lendu and mboloko and sindula, [251]
and I cut them all up and dried them carefully. When they were nice and dry I wrapped the meat in fresh mongongo leaves and put
it all in my basket and set off for the village. But on the way I saw 538
a bad spirit coming toward me. I tried to escape but he caught up 439
with me and demanded the meat. I said, 'No, this is for my master. 177 776
I cannot give it to you. You may take all my own food, but not this meat—that is for my beloved master.' But the spirit was not to be put off, and I had to fight with him. Finally I managed to escape, because I am strong and a great hunter, and I ran on toward the
village as fast as I could. Spirits are very bad things to fight. They [186]
would kill any villager; only we Pygmies can deal with them. But then I saw the spirit again and this time he was more clever than I, and he changed into my grandmother. 'A'i, Cephu! Where are you
going with all that meat?' she asked me. Now my grandmother died [769]
many years ago and I had to be polite to her. So I told her I was taking it to my beloved master. But she got angry and demanded it, asking if I would refuse it to her, a Pygmy, my own grandmother, and bring it to a villager? I pleaded with her and begged her, telling her how good my master always was to me, and how hungry he was for meat. But she snatched the basket from me, and because she was my

538 grandmother I could not strike her or stop her, and she ran off down
439 the trail.

177
776 "As she was running she changed into a spirit again so that she could run faster, and as soon as my grandmother was a spirit once more I could fight, so I fought and fought, and the spirit nearly killed me, and he went off in the manner of spirits and left me with nothing, not even my basket.

"When I came to the village I was crying because I had nothing to offer my master, and when my master asked me what was wrong I told him this story. He was terribly sorry because he knows what dreadful lives we BaMbuti lead, surrounded by all these bad spirits. [186] He said if it was not for the spirits he would come into the forest and hunt himself, but everyone knows how dangerous the spirits are to villagers. Then I asked him if I could have some rice as I had lost all my own food as well as his. He said, 'Of course, my poor Pygmy, you have tried to help your master, and you can't help it if you are just a Pygmy and have to live among all those dreadful spirits.'

"So he gave me rice and plantains and I came away happy. How kind the villagers are to their poor Pygmies!"

[186] Every time Cephu tells this story it brings knowing smiles to the faces of all who listen, because every "poor Pygmy" has some trick such as Cephu's, by which he twists his "master" around his little finger and at the same time heightens the fear of the villagers for the forest by constantly repeating stories of imaginary spirits and dread dangers.

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177 This story, as often happened, set off another. Old Asofalinda, Ekianga's sister, was not to be outdone. She described how she had cut down a fine stalk of plantains outside the village but was surprised in the act by the owner. She just had time to push the plantains into a hole in the ground at the foot of the tree. The villager asked what she was doing there, and what she was putting in the [776] hole. "Oh, master," she replied, "there was a dreadful dangerous

spirit-animal and he was going to attack you so I drove him into 538 776
the hole and I dare not leave it or he will come out and kill you! 177
Run and get your spear and save me, your poor Pygmy!" The villager
was scared out of his wits and ran away. Asofalinda promptly hid
the plantains elsewhere and quickly returned to the hole.

At this point in the story, Masamba, Njobo's wife, came to help 538
act out the rest. Asofalinda crouched at the foot of a tree, pretending 536
that she was covering a hole in the ground, and Masamba, acting the 776
part of the villager, crept onto the scene, carrying a spear and looking 177
very frightened. As they acted the scene, the villager came up
behind Asofalinda and asked timidly if the spirit-animal was still
there. "Yes," said Asofalinda, over her shoulder. "But I have used [789]
my magic and sung it to sleep so that you will be able to kill it.
But you must be very quiet and very careful. You are the only one
who could do it, you are so big and strong and clever, not like we
poor Pygmies."

Saying this, she slowly uncovered the hole and whispered to the villager to stoop down and peer in. Masamba then cautiously bent over and peered into the imaginary hole. "No," said Asofalinda, "you will have to look deeper. It is a big hole and the spirit-animal is right at the back. But you must be very quiet or it will wake up and kill you first." So Masamba stooped lower and Asofalinda finished the scene with no further commentary. It was hardly necessary.
She crept behind Masamba and kicked her heartily in the backside, [522]
and ran off laughing and clapping her hands with mirth. Even Masamba, who suffered the brunt of the joke, enjoyed it so much that the two of them re-enacted it four times that one afternoon.

In ways like this, even on a rainy day when there is no hunting 512
or gathering to be done, a camp can be made lively and entertaining. 821
But generally rain brings depression. People sit in their huts and peer 181
out miserably. On the whole, however, the tenor of life is even, wet

512 821 or dry, with few real ups and downs that affect the life of the group
181 as a whole.

224 Occasionally an elephant is killed, and that means the entire camp
361 will be abandoned at once and a new one built around the dead
527 animal, so that it can be eaten on the spot. The Pygmies point out
that this is easier than bringing the elephant to the camp. It means
a week of merry-making, of singing and dancing and no hunting.
177 The only trouble is that it also means visits from the villagers. On
527 such occasions they will pluck up their courage and venture into the
43 forest, feeling that with such an abundance of meat the Pygmies
574 will be in a generous frame of mind. The Pygmies try to avoid this
by immediately sending meat to the village. But when villagers do
come, they are generally courteously received and allowed to stay
for a day or two. After that, if they are slow with gifts of rice or
tobacco, the Pygmies have various ways of making them move on.
The forest is the world of the Pygmy, and he is not bashful about
telling a villager who outstays his welcome just what he thinks of
him.

177 I stayed in one camp which was only a few hours from the village
and on the way to a Negro fishing ground. We were constantly beset by villagers passing through, and after a while the Pygmies got
tired of feeding them, tired of being used as a convenient stopping
177 place. So when they were asked for food, the Pygmies would agree
525 on condition that the villagers join them in a game of *panda*. This
is a gambling game in which beans are thrown on a mat, or on a
flat piece of ground. Some of them are quickly scooped up by one
of the two players. The other, looking to see how many are left,
has to estimate at a glance how many his opponent has taken. He
then tells his opponent to throw down one, two, or three beans, or to
stay as he is. The count is then made—also at a glance—and if the
player has an exact multiple of four he wins. But against villagers
[151] Pygmies always win. For one thing they have an uncanny sense of

form that enables them in a moment to know the exact number 177
thrown down. And for another the villagers are not so nimble as the 525 [151]
Pygmies. When a Pygmy sees that he is going to lose by a couple of beans, he quickly drops them from the store he has concealed between his fingers, or even in his hair, thus by a triumphant jerk of his hands or his head throwing in the winning beans.

The villagers left that camp stripped of their fish, their tobacco, and whatever else they had to gamble away, and they soon came to prefer an alternative route that by-passed our camp.

There are a few villagers that are welcome in a Pygmy camp, but 177
they are rare. Others can come with sackloads of food and still get 186
a cold reception. I have seen this happen; as soon as the Pygmies 574
have divided up the food they send the villagers on their way. But others can come empty-handed and be received gladly, because they
understand the Pygmies and the forest. For the Pygmies this is the [828]
criterion of a "real person," as opposed to the animal-humans who live in permanent villages out in the open, away from the shelter and affection of the trees.

Any visitations by villagers are temporary, and they usually have 648
some political significance. A Negro chief who wants to win more 177
Pygmies to his village may send out a son with gifts to stay in a Pygmy camp. Every day more gifts and food are sent out so that he can distribute these. It is a risky business because, as the villagers say, "The BaMbuti eat us up until we have nothing left for ourselves!" But if a chief's son wins the affection of the Pygmies, his father will have won a steady supply of meat—for a time, anyway.

One afternoon I saw two village girls arrive, followed by two 123
servants who threw down loads of plantains and sweet bananas, and 177
a sack of manioc flour. The servants left and the girls came over and [262]
sat down unconcernedly at Masamba's fire. Masamba came out of [521]
her hut and greeted them with warmth, and soon a number of

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177 women gathered around, chattering away gaily and asking for news
521 of the village.

C The girls were Amina, daughter of an important BaBira subchief,
648
439 and her cousin. Her father was hoping, she said, that she might be
177 allowed to stay for a few days and bring him back some meat. She
P obviously knew the Pygmies well, because without waiting to be
123
177 asked she distributed the plantains. She said she would keep the
439 manioc flour until the meat began to come in. Apparently she was
P well liked, because as soon as people heard of her presence they came
123 over to shake her hand, in the manner of villagers, grasping each
177
C other's wrists. Kenge told me all about her, and said that her father
832 was one of the least animal-like villagers. He asked me which of the
[576] two girls I thought looked the more attractive. I said Amina, without a doubt. She was the most beautiful girl I had seen in a long time; the BaBira are by no means noted for their good looks. Amina was tall and a warm brown in color. She carried herself with the inborn grace of Bantu women; her eyes were deep and thoughtful; her expression was kind and gentle. Yes, she was certainly the more beautiful of the two. Kenge nodded thoughtfully and changed the conversation.

P
123 That night I sat up late with the men, and when I went back to
[513] my hut I was surprised not to see any bachelors sleeping on the floor
[372] as they usually did. But three logs were placed beside the bed and were glowing cheerfully. I sat down on the edge of the bed and found, as I had expected, that Kenge had curled up in my blanket. He was considerate enough, on such occasions, not to take my blanket onto the floor, but rather to take half of the bed. So I crawled in beside him and was about to say something when I realized that the body beside me was considerably taller than Kenge, and very differently shaped. It was Amina.

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123 It was a difficult moment, but I could see the whole situation at
177 once. I had become the center of a nice political maneuver. The
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chief had sent his daughter to win the Pygmies, not by her gifts of 648
plantains and manioc flour, but by winning me. The Pygmies, anx- C
ious to get what they could out of the situation, liking Amina any- 648 123
way, but having some consideration for me, got Kenge to find out
which of the two girls I preferred. That, evidently, was to be the
limit of my choice in the matter. I confess I was glad I had chosen
Amina, but I could see all sorts of difficulties arising if I were to C
take advantage of the situation. No doubt the chief had in mind the [583]
considerable bride-wealth he could demand should, by any chance,
his daughter bear a mulatto child. Still, it was good of him to send
his prettiest daughter.

I considered for a minute or two and then said, "Amina," very P
quietly. It had begun to rain, and I half hoped she would not hear C 123
me. It would be a terrible disgrace to her—and to me—if I turned
her out, but I wanted no part of a lengthy and costly dispute over
bride-wealth. But Amina was by no means asleep. She laughed
lightly and made fun of my KiNgwana name, which means "the
long one." So I said, "Amina!" once more, a little more sharply,
still trying to think what a supposed gentleman and scholar should
do in such circumstances. But Amina was not helping. She just snug- C
gled closer and said, "Yes, tall one?" Then in a moment of inspira- P 123
tion I simply said, "Amina, the roof is leaking." And with masculine 462
authority I added, "Get up and fix it." 356 593

Without a word she got up and started searching for the leak,
pulling at the leaves until a steady trickle of water came down,
splashing on the floor beside the bed. By the time she had repaired
the damage and checked the whole roof with womanly efficiency I
was asleep—at least so I pretended. With a sigh she pulled the
blanket from me and also went to sleep—or perhaps she too was
pretending. But it was a solution, if a chilly one. My last thoughts P C
that night were that Kenge would at least have left me some of the 123 593

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C
123 blanket, no matter how annoyed with me he was. These villagers—
593 they were just animals.

When I awoke in the morning I hardly dared open my eyes, but a tentative exploration proved that the other half of the bed was empty. I thought all was well after all. Amina had cut her losses and left at dawn. But when I had put my trousers on and stooped through the low entrance of the hut into the camp, there she was. She was sitting on a log beside the hut, quietly fanning the fire and cooking my breakfast, just as every other wife was doing for her husband. Kenge was making it very obvious to everyone that he was eating with the bachelors, who were making it obvious that they had not slept in my hut that night. Everyone else studiously ignored my appearance, except old Moke, who was walking past on his way to the stream to bathe. He looked at me sideways, shook his head and gave a little knowing old laugh. And as he walked on he shook his head all the more vigorously and laughed all the louder.

I was about to go after him, thinking that at least I could ask his advice, but Amina caught hold of my trouser leg and said, "There is no need for you to go to the stream to bathe. I have brought you water—behind the hut." So I went behind the hut and washed, and then sat down and had breakfast, while Amina went to
P join the other women and chat with them. While she was gone Kenge
C strolled by and elaborately asked me if the food was all right. He
[462] also asked me, rather loudly, if I had slept well. Amina answered
[356] from across the camp, "Yes, he told me to mend the leak in the roof!" This proof of domestic bliss brought howls of mirth from all around, the more infuriating because I could not see what was funny about it. Then Kenge told me that this was what men always said
C to their wives when they wanted to be allowed to sleep in peace.

P
123 That night, Amina and I came to an agreement. She was to stay with me and cook my food—and mend leaks in the roof every night.

This way she would preserve her reputation and I mine, and there would be no complications. And so it was. P 123

I grew very fond of Amina, and some time later, when I was in a village and became very ill, she walked ten miles every day to see me, and ten miles back. She brought me refreshing fruits and sweet-smelling plants and flowers, and sat beside my bed without saying a word. Only once, I woke up and found she was sitting on the edge of the bed and holding my hand in hers.

When the Pygmies moved camp, Amina took the opportunity to go back to her father's village. I was never sure whether I was glad, or more than just a little sorry, to see her go. But when I thought about it, I realized that apart from all the other reasons, Amina could never have stayed. No matter how well she was liked by the Pygmies, she was still a villager. She had not been brought up to do the hundred and one little things that a Pygmy woman has to know how to do. She did not even know how to beat on the hunt, let alone which vines to follow to find the delicacies hidden in the ground by their roots. She belonged to another world. P 17 186

8

Molimo: the Dance of Death

512 The Lelo River flowed on, rising and falling endlessly; the men went out to hunt and returned with meat; the women went out to gather and came back with mushrooms and nuts and fruits; the children laughed and played. Old men and women did a little foraging in the vicinity of the camp, then sat in the cool shade and told one another about all the things they had done when they were young and would do all over again if they had the chance. At Apa Lelo one day followed the last in this happy-go-lucky way as though this was all there was to life.

000 But at the central fireplace there was always a basket of food,

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

But at the central fireplace there was always a basket of food, P showing that it was a kumamolimo, the only outward indication that 765 the God of the Forest had been invoked and was waiting silently [776] nearby, in the trees or in the Lelo itself, ready to enter the camp at night and join his people in their songs of joy and praise. The casual observer might have thought the youngsters were playing a game when they went around from hut to hut with a fishing line and a basket, collecting food from everyone. There was certainly nothing about their demeanor to indicate that this was an essential part of a great act of communion. And if the same observer were told that this was so, he would probably form the opinion that the molimo, whatever it was, could not mean very much if it was treated so lightly and casually.

This, in fact, is the opinion of the villagers. For them the ritual C act is the important thing. 765 In their religious rites it is the correct performance of the ceremonial that counts most. If correctly performed it is bound to bring the desired results, regardless of the accompanying thought, if indeed there is any. All attention is focused on the act itself. And it must not only be performed correctly, but with a solemnity that betrays fear.

The difference between the two attitudes is perhaps one of those P C fine shades of difference that divide magic from religion, though 765 there is so much overlapping that they can seldom be divided in 771 practice. Whereas the villagers believe that the act itself brings about 789 P results in a way they cannot explain, which is what we call magic, 778 the BaMbuti do not believe this at all. They believe in a benevolent deity or supernatural power which they identify with the forest. To this they owe as much respect and affection and consideration as they owe to their own parents, and from it they can expect the same in return. So, for the Pygmies, it is not so much the act itself that P counts, or the manner in which the act is performed, but the thought 765 that goes with it. 771 The collecting of food from hut to hut is not a

765 771 magical act but a way of emphasizing that this is something in which every single member of the group must participate.

765 562 At first I had thought that the molimo was virtually the sole concern of the men. In the evenings, when the singing first started, there were sometimes a few girls who stood nearby and danced among themselves as we sang, but they were soon sent to join the rest of the women and children in their huts—certainly long before the molimo made its appearance. But one day I felt that something different was going on.

881 765 I had noticed that Kondabate, Manyalibo's daughter, who was married to Ausu, was building an extension at the back of her hut. She and Ausu had no children, and when I asked her why she was enlarging her home she said there was going to be an *elima*, and that all the girls would stay in her hut, under her care. An elima is a celebration that takes place when a girl reaches maturity, as marked by the first appearance of menstrual blood. At such a time she enters a special hut with her girl friends and stays there for a month. But I had heard none of the usual discussion about the event, and I felt this could not be the full answer.

765 574 888 Then, that afternoon, an old, old woman arrived with her husband. They stopped first in Cephu's camp, where they had relatives, but then came on into the main camp, where they were received with the greatest respect. The husband sat down at the kumamolimo and was offered food; the old woman disappeared into Kondabate's house. She stayed there until evening, but all I could hear from inside were occasional snatches of song. It was plain that there were several girls in there as well, and it sounded as though they were either being taught new songs or else rehearsing songs they already knew. They never sang more than a few bars at a time, and I was continually being startled, thinking that I heard something resembling one of the molimo songs.

765 888 That evening the old man joined us for the molimo singing. He

was given special recognition by Moke, who offered him his chair 765
and then sat on the ground beside him. Old Tungana seemed to 888
know him well too. The elders—the *mangese*, the Great Ones— 765
formed a tight cluster of their own, apart from the hunters. The 561
hunters formed their own group, and the youths theirs. The youths 562
and a few of the hunters danced, and we were surrounded by women 535
and girls who watched and joined the songs with handclaps. The
girls formed their own dance circles, but they seemed to be dancing
with much more purpose than on other nights, and they were allowed
to stay up much later. Then they were sent to bed, and the
singing began in earnest. All the girls who had danced went into
Kondabate's hut, and as they opened the leaf door to enter I saw
that the old woman was sitting inside, hunched up over the fire, her
eyes as bright as the coals, wide and unblinking.

The singing went on particularly late that night, and it was only 765
an hour after Moke's usual statement that he was tired that we were
awakened by the blasting of both molimo trumpets as they entered
the camp. I got up hurriedly and saw that Kenge was already gone.
At the door of my hut someone ran up in the dusk and pushed me [123]
back, telling me not to come out, it was too dangerous. Just as he
said this, there was a tremendous blow on top of the hut, and the
molimo swept by. It was surrounded by at least twenty youths, all,
as far as I could see, carrying long branches with which they beat
on the roofs and walls of every hut. They continued this for an hour,
the trumpets blaring angrily, the youths making loud hunting cries.
As the forest grew lighter I could see that all the youths were decorated
with leafy branches stuck in their belts, so that it looked as
though each trumpet was surrounded by a little forest of its own.

Quite a number of huts had been damaged, but there was no word 765
of protest. Ekianga danced up and down with a spear under each arm 535
and ran rings around the trumpets. I was more impressed than ever 481
by the high-stepping gait that he and everyone else used. They did

765 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous
535 speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to
481 come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one,
533 went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tenta-
372 tive, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge.
152 Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, 765
go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were 152
two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the 765
camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each 533
hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was completely [372]
dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Kondabate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their [302]
bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined [301]
circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end. They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in 765
unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so 535
close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the 765
women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire 562
of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night. It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great head- [142]
dress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than [292]

765 ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it
562 seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her
142 knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in
[292] ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

765 Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped
562 scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two
832 years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and
[304] trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally
765 wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down
562 opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking
152 up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

765 After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then
562 with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the
533 sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with
765 just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized
562 the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent mo-
535 limo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the
[534] banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

this direction and that; even her fingers each seemed to have a dance 765
of its own. But her head was still, and her eyes were fixed on those 562
of Kondabate. 535

At this point Kondabate handed the banja to another of the 765
women standing nearby and led the young girls right into the center 562
of the men's group, dancing in a close circle around the molimo fire. 535
As they moved around, the men stood up and made room for them, 533
and now the singing came almost entirely from the women. The men just stood and stamped and clapped and growled a bass accompaniment. The girls danced more and more wildly, but their heads and eyes were always turned toward the molimo fire, no matter how violent the body movement. After nearly half an hour the old woman, still crouching, ran into the center after the girls, and turning to face them from the far side of the fire she drove them slowly backward, back until they were lost among the others at the edge of the group. The singing was quieter, and in a few minutes it faded away altogether. Not a word was spoken.

After a short rest the singing started again, and this time there was no mistaking it—the women were leading. Manyalibo's wife picked up the banja and beat them, sharply and decisively, and the girls began the song. The men followed in obedient chorus. Once again, as the song grew faster, the old woman began to twitch until her whole body was alive with movement. Then she sprang up and came into the center of the kumamolimo alone. For an instant she stood there, and her head moved sharply from side to side. It was like the movement of a bird, keeping a wary eye open for possible foes. As she began to dance she seemed to sink slowly into the ground, her knees folding up like a concertina, her body bending at the waist; but always her head stuck out in front, jerking from side to side, eyes staring and expressionless.

She circled the fire three times, looking out and upward into the [372]
night, but unseeing; then as if satisfied that she was alone and un-

765 observed she flung her head and her whole body around and faced
562 the fire directly. She was about seven or eight feet away from it. She
535 advanced slowly and cautiously, two steps forward, one step back,
533 her attention riveted on the flames. The singing was louder and faster,
372 but she refused to be hurried. At her own pace she approached closer and closer until it seemed impossible that she could stand the heat. She hesitated at the brink of the fire, her frail body gleaming with sweat, her face glowing and trembling. She made as if she was going to pounce on the fire, but whirled around at the last moment and danced quickly back to where the women were singing, watching her, eagerly and anxiously. She sat down on her haunches and accepted a steaming bowl of liko.

The singing did not stop this time but went on quietly at a slower tempo. The men made no attempt to move back closer to the fire. After about ten minutes the old lady, apparently refreshed and as full of vigor as ever, danced back into the men's circle, with Kondabate at her side. Their movements were perfectly co-ordinated, even to the twitching of their heads; as they sank down close to the
765 ground they might have been one person. But as they neared the
562 fire, again having circled it several times, the old woman sprang to
535 her feet and ran swiftly around to the far side and crouched there,
372 staring at Kondabate through the flames. They started circling once more, each keeping her eyes on the other, moving from side to side so that they were always opposite each other. But now they were closer to the fire than they had ever been and on their hands and knees they passed through the hot ashes, as though trying to reach each other through the flames.

Finally Kondabate retreated and squatted down at the edge of the circle, her body twitching just as the old woman's had done, her eyes staring and empty as she gazed at the molimo fire. The men heaped more wood on the flames, which were beginning to die down.
[533] Now they were singing as loudly as the women, stamping on the

ground with their feet and dancing with their arms and bodies, but 765
never moving from where they stood. The old woman grew taller 562
and more upright. Her bent old frame straightened out and she stood 535
proudly, arms at her side, bent at the elbows so that her hands were 372
out in front. Those hands had a life of their own, pointing and [533]
gesticulating and dancing with infinite grace at the end of motionless arms. The old woman no longer looked from side to side. She knew she had nothing to fear now, that she was the victor. And when she stooped once more to approach the fire she did not stoop so low, and each step was a step forward. As the singing quickened so did her steps, until with a burst of frenzied shouting she was driven right into the flames.

She seemed to hover there an instant, that skinny old crone who should have been burned to a cinder in a flash. Then she whirled around and kicked out with her feet, scattering the sacred molimo fire in all directions. Blazing logs and glowing embers alike she scattered, right among the circle of men surrounding her. And then she danced away, erect and proud. The men, without even faltering in their song, quickly gathered all the scattered embers and threw them back onto the remaining coals, and then for the first time they moved in a dance of their own. They danced in a wild circle, and as they danced their bodies swayed backward and forward, facing the fire, as though by imitation of the act of generation they were giving the fire new life. And as they danced the flames slowly began to rise, and as they rose the men danced all the more violently, until they had brought the fire of the molimo back to life.

Twice more this happened. Each time the old woman made a
more determined effort to stamp the fire out of existence. And each [831]
time the strangely beautiful and exciting erotic dance of the men
gave it new life. Finally the old woman conceded defeat and retreated 765
among the others. Shortly afterward all the women disappeared, and 562

765 the men rearranged themselves at the kumamolimo without making
562 any mention of what had happened.

I looked at Moke, and found him staring at me curiously. He understood my question and nodded. Yes, this was what he had told me I was yet to see.

765 There is an old legend that once it was the women who "owned"
562 the molimo, but the men stole it from them and ever since the
773 women have been forbidden to see it. Perhaps this was a way of
reminding the men of the origin of their molimo. There is another old legend which tells that it was a woman who stole fire from the chimpanzees or, in yet another version, from the great forest spirit. Perhaps the dance had been in imitation of this. I did not understand it by any means, but somehow it seemed to make sense.

562 The woman is not discriminated against in BaMbuti society as
she is in some African societies. She has a full and important role to
[462] play. There is relatively little specialization according to sex. Even
the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them, or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men, if she has something relevant to say. In fact, it was the apparent absolute dominance of the male in the molimo that had seemed to be the exception.

562 But now even in this the woman had come into her own. She had
372 asserted her prior claim to the fire of life, and her ability to destroy
182 it, to extinguish life. Or had she been destroying it? Perhaps when
she was kicking the fire out in all directions among the menfolk she was giving it to them, for them to gather and rebuild and revitalize with the dance of life.

765 I was trying to puzzle it all out when the singing started again,
533 and I saw that the old woman had returned, alone. All the others
were in their huts, and the men seemed to be singing as though by their song they could drive the last remaining female away. They sang louder and harder, but she kept circling the kumamolimo, keep-

765
ing in the shadows, until with surprisingly swift and agile strides 533
she was once more in our midst. In her hands she held a long roll of 765
nkusa twine. The men continued singing, and as they sang, the old 533
woman went around knotting a loop around each man's neck, so 824
that in the end we were all tied together. The men made no attempt [284]
to resist; rather, they ignored what was going on. When they were all tied in this way, however, they stopped singing.

Moke spoke—I am not sure whether it was for my benefit or 765
because it was his place to say what he did. He said, "This woman has tied us up. She has bound the men, bound the hunt, and bound the molimo. We can do nothing." Then Manyalibo said that we had to admit we had been bound, and that we should give the woman something as a token of our defeat; then she would let us go. A certain quantity of food and cigarettes was agreed upon, and the old woman solemnly went among us again, untying each man. Nobody attempted to loose himself, but as each man was untied he began to sing once more—the molimo was free. The old woman received her gifts and went back to Cephu's camp, where she and her husband were staying. The couple stayed for another week or two, but she danced only once again. Before she left us she went to every man, giving him her hand to touch as though it were some kind of blessing.

It was not long after this that everyone started talking about when they should bring the molimo to an end. There seemed to be no specific length of time that it should run, and it was just a question of convenience.

There was the matter of the elima to be considered, too, as evi- 881
dently one really was due to be held for two girls, each of whom had reached her first period. The main problem was not the fulfilling of ritual necessities, but rather how to make the most of the festive
occasion. There were different schools of thought as to whether 881
the elima should take place in the village or the forest; the younger 177

881 men held out for the village, the older for the forest. All the older
177 men except Tungana, that is. That wily old grandfather thought
881 the village was better as they might be able to make money out of
177 tourists who would pay to see them dance. Tourists had been in-
609 creasing in number ever since the Animal Station had been established at Epulu, and the Pygmies found tourists even easier to trick than villagers.

881 It was eventually decided that the elima, which had already begun
177 in Kondabate's hut, should go to the village and take over Ekianga's house, as it was the biggest and he was related to one of the girls anyway. The villagers would give food to the elima. Asofalinda would be in charge. Everyone else would stay a while longer in the forest.
[765 Then they would bring the molimo to the village one night and have a final dance there, because the villagers believed that a period of mourning, which is how they regarded the molimo, should end with a ritual feast, and so they would give the Pygmies more food. That would put all the men in a good humor to attend to their part of the elima festivities.

765 I was a little surprised that they should even think of bringing the
177 molimo to the village. Moke told me not to worry, that no villagers would know anything of what went on in the forest, and if any villagers came to watch they would only see the Pygmies imitating what the villagers do themselves. But he shook his head and added, "Even so, it *is* bad. It is a thing of the forest, and it should end there. Perhaps we shall have to end it twice."

361 The night before we were due to move back to the village every-
152 one was very quiet. The women prepared the food for the evening
[521] meal without talking to one another. Tungana sat outside his hut, hunched forward, his gray old head resting on one hand because he had an abscess on the side of his neck. Moke wandered restlessly from one end of the camp to the other, and Masisi snapped at every-
361 one who gave him an excuse. This was some three months after

the molimo had begun, and we were in a camp much closer to the 361
village than we had been at Apa Lelo . . . Only about two hours'
walk away. Cephu, as usual, had his camp at a distance, but rather
farther removed than usual, and we saw less of him than ever. The
next morning we found that he had abandoned his camp the night
before and gone to join a hunting group farther to the west; he
wanted no part of returning to the village.

Even the children were depressed and sat around in silent little 857
groups fitfully playing with spinning tops made from slices of forest 152
nuts. Every now and again one of them got in the way of an adult
and was severely smacked. His cries brought only a sterner cuffing,
and by nightfall the camp was filled with wailing children and bad-
tempered adults. Only the youths seemed cheerful. For them the 883
village meant tobacco, palm wine, the wild erotic dancing the Pyg- 177
mies love to perform for the villagers, and a relaxation from the 152
tensions of the forest. They would no longer be hunting, so they
would be free from the restrictions that way of life imposed. They
would no longer be in the forest, so they would be free from its ever-
present authority. If the villagers thought the BaMbuti then came
under their authority, that was their mistake.

While the youths dreamed of the fun they were going to have, 883
particularly with the girls in the elima house, all the adults were 177
silent. Kenge, who although he was older still liked to associate 521
with the youths, stood boastfully in the middle of a group of admirers 273
and talked of all the village girls he was going to sleep with. And [836]
not only one a night, but two, three, perhaps even thirty. "And I
am going to drink palm wine until there is no more to drink. I am
going to steal all the palm wine there is in the village and drink it
all myself, to make me strong. But I won't get drunk, so when they
come to me and say, 'Kenge, why have you drunken all our palm
wine?' I shall just say, 'You committer of incest' "—Kenge had a
very descriptive word for this—" 'if I had drunk all your palm wine

883 177 521 would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and buy themselves beer."

[273] "And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

554 521 [152] Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you [765] spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

765 This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

765 533 [535] The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been. The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it with love. When some of the youngsters began to dance Moke shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-

ing us as gently as the breeze. When he had finished he stood by 765
the fire and sang to the forest by himself, with the molimo answering 533
from a great distance, getting fainter and fainter. Finally they
were both singing so quietly that I could hardly distinguish their
music from the music of the crickets and the frogs and the birds of
the night. Somewhere a hyrax gave its throaty, rasping call of despair, [136]
and an owl hooted. Moke sat down, and nobody spoke, and nobody
sang. Something wonderful had come into our lives and filled them [152]
with the magic of love and trust, and though we still possessed that
love and trust, we regretted the going of the power that had brought
it.

At dawn we were awakened as usual by the sound of the two 765
trumpets. But there was a quality about their tone that was harsh 534
and brash. We all knew that the real molimo had gone, but we had 177
to go through with the final ritual for the benefit of the villagers.
The bellowings did not last long, and soon the trumpets disappeared
in the direction of the village with a bunch of noisy youths
in attendance. Later, when the main body of the camp was packed
up and ready to leave, one of the youths came running back and
told us with great excitement what fun they had had frightening
the villagers with the molimo, but that now it was safely hidden in
the forest, on the outskirts of the village.

We got a warm reception as we emerged from the plantations 177
among the neat rows of mud houses. The villagers eyed the baskets
on the women's backs and tried to estimate how much meat they
were bringing. They called out offers of free meals in an attempt to
bribe their way into the favor of people whom they theoretically
regarded as slaves. As we filed from the leafy plantation, leaving the
forest behind us, we left a kind and friendly world and entered a
different one. Here, if the world was open to the sky it was also
open to greed and suspicion and treachery. Village women attached
themselves to "their" Pygmies and tried to pry into the baskets

P 177 to verify just how much meat there was, accusing them of having eaten it all themselves. But the Pygmies paid no attention. Some made for their own village and dumped their belongings there. I wandered on with the others who went straight to their patrons to whom they presented the meat they had brought with them. Before long they were sitting down in whatever shade they could find, fanning themselves to keep the flies and mosquitoes away, eating heartily from enamel dishes, drinking dirty village water from enamel mugs.

P 177 361 C 361 After spending some time, rather like the Pygmies, greeting the various villagers, I returned to the Pygmy village and sat in the shade of my veranda looking down the dismal, double row of tumbledown huts. About half a mile away, in the background, the forest raised its tall dark face against the edge of the plantations, dwarfing the leafy plantain trees that were only three times as tall as men, making them look like blades of grass. Ineffectual blades of grass that had, with the help of village-man, usurped the place of the great primeval forest, but which in a year or two would be choked to a final death as the forest claimed its own. Clouds of dust arose as a small, disconsolate group of children played football with a ball presented to them by some fond villager. The dust got into my nostrils and made me feel suddenly bad-tempered. Kenge, who was trying to cook me a meal, cursed the children and told them to go and play somewhere else. But they had no bopi—no cool, clean streams, no vine swings. So they went off to chase the dogs, goats and chickens of the nearest Negro household.

At the far end of the little village stood Ekianga's house, the only one that was not falling to pieces. It straddled the width of the village, bridging the space between the two not very straight rows of smaller huts. P [881] The elima girls made a couple of sorties from the single door, dashing around to the back of the house where they could not be seen. Otherwise all was quiet.

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought 262
in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return 264 439
for what they had given away they had received generous portions 177
of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter
tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts
in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and children 533
retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central 571
fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, [345]
or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what [535]
was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They
sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work
in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing.
They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back
in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected
that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped.
They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not
caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the 765
molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two 534
youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands 372
high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground,
they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and
imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled
the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it
sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing
as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded
now by all the youths, the molimo started running around,
faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men
who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing
in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they
were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo 765
plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil- 534

765 lage, and I heard leaves being ripped off roofs and the dried mud
534 beaten from walls.

765 There was a subtle change of atmosphere, and a tremendous air
533 of expectancy. By their insistent singing the older men seemed to
781 be trying to avert some disaster, as did the youths by their danc-
[513] ing. Moke allowed nobody to sleep or rest except for a very brief
spell when he kept half a dozen men singing while the others dozed
as best they could around the fire. Then he woke us up and goaded
us all into singing harder than ever. The molimo had left and was
evidently playing havoc in the Negro village. But as we sang it
came sweeping back into the camp from behind Ekianga's house.
765 The two fire-dancers in front sent showers of sparks up into the air
781 and onto the ground. The molimo made straight for the central fire.
535 It knocked us aside—even old Tungana—and slowly and deliber-
534 ately it trampled through the fire, scattering it to all sides.
372

The men who had been sitting were on their feet at once, and hurriedly threw the scattered logs back into the center and joined the dancers in bringing life back to the fire. But the molimo was insistent, and the next time all the men joined with it. Reluctantly at first, then sharing the inevitability of the occasion they too danced and stamped among the flaming logs until there was nothing left but glowing coals. As the pace of the dance increased, the embers were scattered wider and wider, until the whole of the village seemed to be carpeted with winking red eyes. The molimo was once again blowing martial blasts, and the men accompanied it with a deep, rhythmic chant. All except a few of the elders followed it on its last tour of the camp, slow and majestic, tramping out the fire of life until there was only one glowing ember left. I saw Moke sadly sit down on the ground beside it, pick it up in his hands and fondle it.
[276] He took a cigarette butt from behind his ear and lighted it with the
coal. He put the coal carefully back on the ground, stood up and stepped on it until it too was extinguished. Then he turned his back on us all and disappeared into his hut.

on us all and disappeared into his hut. The molimo, surrounded by 765
a triumphant entourage, now left the village, and we escorted it 534
back to the forest. Dawn was breaking, streaking the sky with gold and crimson, and as soon as we had found a suitable temporary hiding place we returned to the village.

It was in a dreadful state of chaos. Black ashes and cinders covered 765
the ground everywhere; manioc plants were uprooted, sugar cane trampled down, chairs smashed, leaves torn off roofs and the mud from many walls crumbled on the ground. The Negro villagers were full of complaints, but in the Pygmy village men and women were silent, sleepily clearing up the wreckage and preparing for the midday feast. Nobles and headmen began arriving from neighboring villages, and as even the four poles that represented the Pygmy baraza had been smashed to the ground, they took possession of my veranda. They had come to supervise the ritual feast which, according to their custom, marked the end of the mourning ceremonies for Balekimito. They were a little surprised to find that the elima occupied the house in which Balekimito had died, but the Pygmies were in no mood to argue. They just shrugged their shoulders and said it was a good house. As far as they were concerned they had finished mourning their personal loss as soon as their mother had
been buried. From then onward they had been fulfilling their duty 761
to the forest by rejoicing with the molimo for the long and good 765
life that had been granted to the old lady. They had acknowledged 372
the gift of the fire of life from the forest, and the forest's right and 778
power to withdraw it; they had acknowledged and accepted the facts of life and death as both being, equally, the gift of their god.

But if the villagers wanted them to have a formal feast to end 765
the mourning, and were willing to give the food, they did not object. 594

The food was cooked and la[illegible]ut in the center of my veranda, 177
which when the sun was high was the only cool and shady place in the village. This meant that the villagers were pushed to the edge as

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765 the Pygmies came in to eat. The men came in and sat down and ate
574 without ceremony while their patrons watched hungrily. But they
177 were not related to Balekimito, so they could not partake. Women,
too, were excluded, according to the village rules of the game, but
I saw a number of dishes quietly slipped to one side, and shortly
afterward all the women were enjoying their own feast, concealed
behind the elima hut.

C The villagers asked if everyone had ritually bathed, to wash off
765 the taint of death, and everyone politely said yes. The villagers then
563 asked if the Pygmies had any meat to spare, and the Pygmies equally
P
765 politely said no. They had given it all to the molimo, they said,
177 and to this there was no answer, for it was a very creditable thing to
do, in village eyes. I bought a large quantity of palm wine, however,
and this mollified to some extent the strained feelings of the patrons.
They knew they were being deceived and cheated, yet they felt they
were only doing what was right in trying to impose their beliefs and
practices on the forest savages who had no culture of their own. If
the forest spirits struck the Pygmies down for not having heeded
their patrons, for not having performed all the necessary rituals as
they had been told, then it was not the fault of the villagers. They
drank their fill and departed.

P Once the Negroes had gone we all tried to get some sleep, for it
765 was late afternoon and we had had no rest. But for three months the
512
513 men had sung and danced and feasted every night and for three
months the women and children had been sent to bed early, forbidden
to come out and take part in the festivities except for the
dance of the old woman. Now the molimo was over, and the women
P took advantage of the fact. After all, an elima had begun, and that
881 was as important to the women as the molimo was to the men. At
dusk all the girls of the elima came out of their hut. Their beautiful
P
[832] young bodies shone and glistened with the palm oil that had been
carefully rubbed into the skin, making them even more alluring to

the young bachelors. And together with the older women they began to sing, in deep contralto tones. The men protested loudly that they were tired and wanted to sleep. But the women just laughed and sang all the louder. The elima had started in earnest. 881 [832] [533]

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The World of the Village

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I FOUND THE FIRST WEEK back in the village difficult and depressing. During the day the air was hot and dry, and filled with fine particles of dust. At night, when it was cooler, gnats and mosquitoes made me appreciate all the more their absence in the forest. My hut, ten times the size of my home in the hunting camp, seemed close and stuffy, and as I lay in bed I could hear the huge spiders, some several inches across, crawling about in the leaves of the roof. Occasionally one dropped onto the bed with a dull thud and lay there for a while before stalking away. At first I carried out an active campaign to get rid of them, but it was useless—and a mosquito net would have been unbearably hot.

THE WORLD OF THE VILLAGE

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The familiar night sounds of the forest were replaced by the cries of drunks coming home from a dance at the nearby Hotel de Bière, where an antique Victrola ground out records of the African version of the Calypso, imported from the coast. In the Negro village there were constant fights—not the wordy fights of the Pygmies, but good old-fashioned fisticuffs. These were likely to occur at any time of night, depending on how late it was when an outraged husband, returning from a rendezvous with his current girl friend, reached his own hut to find his wife in bed with someone else.

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In our small Pygmy village the fires were all brought inside at night, and the smoke helped to keep away the mosquitoes. The doors were pulled tight shut, and nobody slept out in the open. Just an occasional murmured comment on the noise made by "those black savages" was all that was heard, none of the usual cheerful gossip that used to go on every night until, one by one, the hunters fell asleep.

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But in the very dead of night I could hear the sound of crickets from the forest, reminding me that it was, after all, not so far away, and all around us. Sometimes when the moon was full I wandered around the sleeping village, to the edges of the plantations. There the forest stood up into the night like a great black wall, surrounding this small circle, cut so ineffectively out of its very heart. It rose up all around, confident in the knowledge that it would soon claim its own and grow back more thickly than ever, where it had been cut. There were several such abandoned villages nearby, not long abandoned; yet already the forest towered above them in the unsmiling triumph of inevitability. The forest destroyed everything but its own. Only against the machine age, which had barely reached it, was it powerless.

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[3[illegible]1]

In the very early hours the forest made itself felt, but close as it was it faded far away with the coming of dawn. The morning sounds of cocks crowing, goats bleating, and the elephants of the Station de

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000 Chasse as they were put through their exercises, all obscured the
faint chirpings of crickets and birds and the chatter of monkeys.
361 And as the sun rose and began to beat down on the parched and
241 scorched earth, the village asserted once more its determination to
512 dominate the hostile world around it. The men went off to cut down
[313] more trees for more houses and bigger plantations, and the women
went to hoe and cultivate the small fields so laboriously prepared,
which after another one or two years of hard work would have to be
abandoned. For the soil which can support the primeval forest with
luxurious ease refuses to bear fruit to the crops of the villagers for
more than three consecutive years.

361 In the neighborhood of the Epulu there were, in fact, several vil-
177 lages. Some twenty-five years earlier, when Patrick Putnam first
621 came to the spot and decided to settle there, there were none. He
built his home with the help of various men of different tribes whom
he took around with him to assist him in his work. Some were from
villages several hundred miles away. They called in other helpers,
and gradually the village of Camp Putnam came into being. A
pretty, straggling village, neat huts dotted haphazardly either side of
a gracefully curving track, just wide enough for a car to pass through
to Pat's home. Even though its members came from half a dozen
different tribes, it quickly assumed the characteristics of a traditional,
tribal, forest village. The family feeling that is so powerful where a
village consists of all the men of a single clan, their wives and chil-
dren, was replaced by a common loyalty to Pat, who worked day
and night in his small dispensary, saving the lives of the people he
loved and, in the end, giving his own. Pat acted as chief in nearly all
respects. Disputes were brought to him and he settled them, wisely
and justly, according to the tribal laws he knew so well. The village
began to attract Pygmies, who gradually attached themselves, again
in a perfectly traditional manner.

To a lesser extent this was so even with the new and distinctly

commercial village that was set up on the roadside, by the government, 361
immediately after Pat's death. The main focus of the village 177
was not, as in so many villages, in either special plantations or road 621
work, but in the Station de Chasse. This, with its collection of live
forest animals, became an attraction for wealthy tourists with time
and money enough to make the trip from Stanleyville or Beni; hence
the optimistic Belgian who built the motel directly opposite. A little
farther up the road, away from the river, were the houses of several
hundred workers. This village stretched right up to the entrance of
Camp Putnam, and beyond was the Hotel de Bière and a line of a
half-dozen or so stores. The majority of these villagers, as in Camp
Putnam, were from distant districts and from many different tribes.
But here they had nobody to hold them together, as Putnam had
his workers; their disputes were settled arbitrarily, according to Belgian
notions of right and wrong. It was a village filled with jealousies, [578]
deep-seated grievances and smoldering hatred.

A few kilometers to each side of the Epulu River were two traditional 361
villages. To the west was Dar es Salaam. The name was 181
brought from the coast by the slave-traders, and its inhabitants were 175
all descendants of the almost universally disliked BaNgwana, who
had sold their souls to the traders and helped them in the capture of
slaves and the theft of ivory. The headman of Dar es Salaam was a [622]
friendly rogue, Musafili. About two kilometers away from Dar es [563]
Salaam was the camp of Musafili's Pygmies. Like every other Negro
he referred to "his" Pygmies as though they were chattels. Although
Dar es Salaam always offered the warmest hospitality, I never felt
at ease there. The heritage of a bloody and treacherous past was only
barely dormant, and the BaNgwana are suspected today, as they
always have been, of practicing the most dreaded forms of witchcraft
and sorcery.

A little farther to the other side of the Epulu was a very different 361
village, and one much more typical of the traditional settlement in

361 this area. It was named Eboyo, and the villagers belonged to the
[103]
[101] BaBira tribe, predominant in the southern and central Ituri. Here
621 there were two chiefs—the traditional chief, Sabani, and the govern-
622 ment-appointed chief, Kapamba. Kapamba's job was to see that the
648 right crops were planted, harvested, and marketed to the Belgian
439 government, and that the taxes were collected and paid over. The
Belgian policy was largely to let the people in this rather difficult and unprofitable part of the Congo live as they had always lived. The only stipulations were that they should live peacefully, and that in addition to their own small plantations they should cultivate more ground for crops which would both help to feed immigrant labor forces, such as the road gangs and the workers at Station de Chasse, and be of commercial value to the Belgians in the world market for such products as cotton, palm oil and groundnuts.

622 Kapamba was not a popular figure. He was small and pathetically
554 ugly. His hut was at the very far end of the village, behind a large
hillock on the top of which stood his baraza. Only his close relatives and a few Pygmies lived near him.

In the village proper, Sabani's house was in the center. Sabani was a sly old man whose father had married a Lese girl, from the
[649] eastern edge of the forest. Sabani changed his tribal affiliation to suit
the convenience of the moment, and the Belgians found it impossible to deal with him, so they appointed Kapamba in his place. But Sabani was still the real power in the village, and the real authority. He was also the chief ritual authority for miles around, and he was a frightening sight when painted and dressed for his role of witch doctor at the time of the nkumbi initiation ceremony. Even on
622 other occasions when he wished to be formal—such as the visit of a
554 Belgian administrator—he was no less inspiring. Ragged trousers
291 came down to within a few inches of feet that were barely covered by
[648] ill-fitting shoes, slit where they pinched so as to be more comfortable.
An old khaki tunic covered his bare chest, and on his head he wore

C They ^[1]
175 brought with them their ancestral beliefs, but the spirits of their
777 ancestors resented being taken away from their rolling, open home-
776 lands and forced to live in the forest. In the plains the very ground
C was sacred to the ancestors who had lived there for generations, but
[869] here there could be no such bond. The graves themselves had to be
[311] abandoned to the forest sooner or later, as the clans shifted endlessly in the search of fresh soil.

C While the only place the villager could call home was the tempo-
177 rary, sun-scorched clearing which he had cut for himself, and in
563 which he would live a few years at the most, to the Pygmy the whole
[361] forest was home, and the village an isolated and foreign territory,
P
179 hostile but ultimately impotent, to be regarded with indifference, amusement, and occasionally with annoyance. The village people were envious of the Pygmies, though they tried to look down on
C them. They were compelled to respect the Pygmies by the fact of
[829] their own belief in the mystical bond between a people and the land of its ancestors. They had no such bond. Just as they were afraid of the spirits of the forest, so they were secretly afraid of the Pygmies, and made them offerings of the first fruits of their plantations, and gave them an important part in the ceremonies for the village dead—the dead who had to be buried in foreign soil that might belong to the village world now, but which would soon belong once again to the forest.

The relationship between the two peoples was a strange one, full of ambivalence and uncertainty. By and large the village was their only common meeting place, for the Negroes disliked going into the forest except when absolutely necessary. The village was the world of the Negro, so he naturally assumed a position of authority and domination in that world. But it was a position without any foundations, for the Pygmy had only to take a few steps to be in his own world.

The Negroes were unable to exercise any physical force to main-

[1] [i.e., the Negro tribes.- Analyst]

tain their control over the Pygmies, so they created and maintained C 177
the myth that there was a hereditary relationship between individual 563
Pygmies and families and individual Negroes and families. P 177

It was not a matter of slavery, rather of mutual convenience. The cost to the Negro was often high, but it was worth while. The Pygmy was able to do for him all the necessary chores that necessitated going into the forest and could being him game that supplemented an otherwise largely vegetarian diet. And in latter days, P C
with the compulsory maintenance of larger plantations, the Negro [464]
found the Pygmy a useful source of additional labor. But for all of this he had to pay, and he was always uncertain how long any one Pygmy or group of Pygmies would stay with him. They were frequently miles away in the heart of the forest, and if the hunting was good no amount of coaxing would bring them back.

For the first week back at Camp Putnam, I found the villagers going out of their way to be generous to "their" Pygmies. The Pygmies wandered about idly, hanging around wherever they found food cooking, occasionally responding to a request to help with some
kind of work. The village blacksmith, a man of many parts, adopted P
Masisi's family, though Masisi himself would have nothing to do 177 571
with him. He said that Baziani was a trouble-maker, whch he was, C
and that he was after Masisi's daughter, which was also true. But 177
Baziani was wealthy, and Masisi's children spent most of their time 571 326
in his baraza. They were well fed and looked after, and treated more 556
as friends than anything else. Baziani, in return, made use of them [443]
to run errands, usually connected with his virtual monopoly of the local hemp market.

Baziani was genuinely fond of the Pygmies. In the evenings he P C
used to bring out his drums and the Pygmies would gather around [593]
and dance. After a while Baziani would relinquish his part as a drummer, acknowledging the superiority of his friends. Then he sat back in his cane chair and watched with a contented smile. He was one of

P
177 the first to help in time of need; as a result he was one of the few
571 villagers who was never short of meat, with plenty of leaves for the
C
177 roof of his house, and invariably with a crowd of good-humored,
571 well-fed Pygmies sitting around in his baraza, waiting to do him
556 some small favor.

C
Masisi, like Njobo and many of the others, had for a long time
177 been attached to a noble of the BaBira tribe, Ngoma, uncle of my
563 erstwhile would-be wife, Amina. But Ngoma was wealthy and had
P
177 many other Pygmies so he did not resent the defection of a number
of them to Camp Putnam. In fact he frequently came to visit them,
E
or sent messages to find out how they were; and when they were
[574] near his home, some distance away, they were presented with stalks
of plantains and baskets of groundnuts and manioc. Whenever work
P
C
on Ngoma's plantation was behind schedule he could be sure of
[464] willing help that would avert the penalty of a heavy fine or confiscation.

P
Manyalibo, however, was attached to Kapamba, the government
177 chief at Eboyo. For all his clowning, Manyalibo was crafty, and he
571
439 played Kapamba for what he could get. Eboyo had some of the best
C
plantains in the region, and it was much closer than Ngoma's village.
177 Manyalibo seldom went there himself, and he refused all calls by
571
439 Kapamba to come and help in the plantation. Sometimes he sent
622 one of his daughters, or his adopted son Madyadya, to help the chief
and to maintain some semblance of a bargain, but they never stayed
for long. Once, when we were at Apa Lelo, Kapamba was in such
dire need of help that he came out to the hunting camp himself.
P
[574] Manyalibo received him courteously enough, and housed him for a
few days, but firmly refused to return to the village with him or to
allow any of his family to return. Kapamba alternately flew into
tantrums and attempted to bribe Manyalibo with stories of the
abundance of rice and plantains waiting for him at the village. Finally
Manyalibo agreed to let his wife go, and he sent her off carrying a

basket with two legs of antelope as a gift for Kapamba's wife. The camp watched the chief leave with few regrets. They had only allowed him to stay because he had brought a quantity of food with him.

P 439 177 521 C 177 571 622 439

Manyalibo's wife returned two days later with her basket full to overflowing with delicacies from the village. She had told Kapamba that she did not want to stay longer without her husband, so he had no option but to allow her to return.

C 622 175 P [571]

Manyalibo's son-in-law, Ausu, was even more of a renegade. His "hereditary master" was André, the chief of a powerful Islamic village just beyond Eboyo. André's father, old Effundi Somali, had been a child when Stanley brought his relief expedition through the forest to rescue Emin Pasha. He used to tell stories of the dreadful wars that were fought in those days, and of the trail of destruction that Stanley had left behind him. While the old man was alive André had worked as head cook at Camp Putnam, but now he was chief in his father's place.

C 622 157 C [186]

Part Bira and part Ngwana, André inherited all the traits of the latter. In his dealings with Europeans he could be charming and helpful; he could also be cunning and crooked. With other villagers he was proud and avaricious, and he had a supreme contempt—which he could disguise whenever it suited him—for the Pygmies.

P C 571 758 C 563

A few years earlier, when Ausu had been hunting forest pig, a boar had charged him and wounded him badly, ripping his stomach and one leg. André had taken Ausu into his own house and cared for him, nursing him for months until he was well again. This was done under the guise of friendship, and I have heard André tell the story many times to illustrate how enlightened he is. But I have also heard Ausu's comment that André had done no more for him than he would have done for a valuable hunting dog. A Pygmy is not unresponsive to genuine kindness, and Ausu would not have left André soon after recovering if there had been any such kindness in the act. But he left and refused to return under any circumstances.

000 the act. But he left and refused to return under any circumstances.

C 563 P 177 439 [136] A few years later I was with Ausu in the forest when we were returning from a hunt. We were up above the Lelo River, where the forest was clear of all undergrowth. Ausu saw something move among a heap of leaves, and we found a baby okapi lying there. The mother okapis leave their young, covering them with leaves, when they go in search of food. Knowing that the Station de Chasse was anxious to have a small live okapi, Ausu picked this one up and P [482] brought it back to camp. We took turns in carrying it over our shoulders, as although it was only a few days old it was both heavy and frisky.

We eventually got it safely to the Station de Chasse, and anticipating some kind of trouble I asked the director to arrange to pay the reward directly to Ausu. Five hundred francs was the standard sum offered for a live okapi, but only if it survived for a week. We returned to the forest, and Ausu regaled the camp with stories of what he was going to do with the money, the equivalent of about ten dollars. Manyalibo asked him if he was going to give any to André. The suggestion raised a storm of protest; André was universally disliked by the Pygmies. But Ausu said that he would give him some, and eventually it was decided to give the chief two hundred francs out of the five hundred.

The very next day a delegation arrived from André's village with P C [686] a letter from André to me. It said that he had heard Ausu was to be paid five hundred francs, and would I see that it was all paid over to him as Ausu was his Pygmy and had refused to work for him for several years. I sent back a reply saying that the Station de Chasse made their payments direct to the person who caught the animal, and that Ausu had offered to pay André two hundred francs. For the next few days we had a series of notes and delegations, pleading, C [694] cajoling and threatening. Finally André said that if Ausu did not give him all the money, he was going to bring a charge of theft against him and have him put in jail. As the tribunals are all Negro, with no Pygmy members, even the most obviously distorted C 563 177 439 charge against a Pygmy is bound to succeed.

C [693] Ausu decided that if this was André's attitude he was not going to give him a single franc. On the day of the payment I went with him to the Station de Chasse, saw him get the five hundred francs, and joined the director in advising him to climb over the fence and return through the forest rather than to leave by the main gate. And sure enough, as I left, there was André with half a dozen of his men, waiting. When he saw he had been tricked he went to the paramount C [694] chief of the area and had a court order made out for Ausu's immediate arrest and confinement to prison. But Ausu was already back in the forest, and in time even court orders are forgotten. And so with all his show of authority and superiority André was unable to do anything; trying to pursue a Pygmy in the forest was a task no villager would undertake for any amount of pay.

There are those, like André, who really believe that the Pygmies are inferior and are meant to be treated like slaves, but for the C 563 177 186 most part the villagers are much more sensible and realistic. If they want to have control over their Pygmies, they know it must be based on something other than threats of physical force. But even the most benevolent of them regard the Pygmies much as the Pygmies regard them in turn—as a kind of convenience. I know of only one villager who was almost accepted by the pygmies as one of themselves. That was Kaweki, the fisherman.

Kaweki was a not-so-young bachelor of the BaBira tribe. He C 159 claimed to dislike women, saying they made far too much noise and cost far too much money. Most of the time he was in the forest, C [226] catching fish in dams and traps, drying them, and sending them down to market with his Pygmy friends. This struck the other villagers as an undignified, not to say an unsafe, procedure. But Kaweki was not one to care about what others thought.

P
C After some persuasion he agreed to allow me to come out to his
123 fishing camp. He was known to dislike and actively discourage visi-
177 tors, so I was not surprised when he was vague as to the camp's
571 whereabouts, merely saying that his friends would bring me there
572 the following week. His "friends" turned out to be Kelemoke and
Hari, a young Pygmy who was a cousin of Kenge, from a village the
far side of Ngoma's. The four of us set off before dawn one morning.

P Even when a whole camp is on the move, men, women and chil-
123 dren, the pace of the Pygmy is swift. But when there are just two or
481
484 three active young hunters they maintain a steady trot for however
far they have to go. I found myself running to keep up, and we only stopped twice during the entire journey. The first time was when we were not far from the Lelo River. We rested among the ruins of an old deserted camp, and we each ate a banana and smoked a cigarette. The second time was shortly after midday, when we met Moke and another on their way back from Kaweki's camp. They were surprised that we had come so far; they themselves intended to
P stop over in one of the old camps for the night. Each of them carried
[372] a smoldering ember wrapped in a leaf, in one hand, and a bow and
bunch of arrows in the other.

C They warned us that Kaweki was not well, and said that it was
754 the *dawa nde BaNgwana*—the magic of the BaNgwana. This made
578 Kenge, Hari and Kelemoke all cluck their tongues, because the *dawa*
P
177 of the BaNgwana is the most powerful of all. Hari said that he had
heard that Musafili was jealous because Kaweki was making so much money with his fish. Kenge, however, said that he thought it was Kaweki's own people, the BaBira of Babama village. They were
C offended, he said, that Kaweki should live in the forest with the
[776] BaMbuti instead of in his own village. They suspected him of being
in league with the evil spirits of the forest. Kelemoke nodded and said yes, it was true that Kaweki fell ill every time he returned to the village, and that it must be the strongest kind of witchcraft to reach

so far out into the forest. Everybody was unhappy, and we resumed C 754 578
our journey at a slower pace. P 177

We were in an area where there were a number of streams, tribu- P
taries to three large rivers which had their source not far to the north- 123
east, spreading out in different directions. There was a lot of heavy 48
undergrowth and we had to follow trails made by antelope. Even the 133
Pygmies had to bend almost double. Hari was leading, and Kenge
shouted at him from behind that there was a much better and quicker
way. Hari laughed at his cousin and said, jokingly, that Kenge was P
a white man's Pygmy, how could he know anything about the for- [829]
est? Kenge made some uncomplimentary retort, and motioned for [186]
me to follow him. We ducked off to one side, and for a while the
going was worse than ever. Very quickly the sounds of the other
two were lost, and I had momentary doubts, for every now and
again Kenge stopped to listen, peering this direction and that. After
another couple of hours Kenge pointed ahead and I heard a new
sound, a distant waterfall. "*Apa nde Kaweki,*" he said; "Kaweki's
camp." Usually he would have said a good deal more, but I was
glad to see that the long day's trek had left even Kenge breathless.

We came to the narrow but swift River Kare, and waded through P
it with caution. Kenge said it was a dangerous river, unexpectedly [136]
deep in places, and full of the small but vicious forest crocodile. It
was here that Kolongo, Ekianga's older brother, had died two years
ago. The waters swirled angrily; they were muddy and full of debris,
the banks were slippery, and it was plain there must have been a
heavy rainfall recently. On the far side the ground rose sharply be-
fore dipping down to the valley where the Itoro River flowed with a
grandeur only found with forest rivers. The undergrowth disappeared,
and once again we were in one of those sylvan glades where every
leaf seemed to tremble a welcome. It was warm and friendly, and as
we began to descend the rumble of the waterfall swelled into a roar. P

Kenge made his way to the edge of the Itoro, just below the falls; 123 484

P
123 it was wide and strangely smooth, but flowing in spate with all the
484 majesty and power of a river twice the size. Kenge said we would
wait for the others there, so as not to shame them in front of Kaweki
P
[515] by arriving first. He went to the water and washed himself. He disapproved of my refusal to do the same, but I was too tired even to sit down. I just propped myself up against a tree and waited. It was not much more than fifteen or twenty minutes later when Kelemoke and Hari came into sight, the one trotting quietly behind the other, apparently as fresh as when they had set out. They feigned surprise at seeing us, and said they had stopped to hunt on the way and had thought we would be in the camp by now. Kenge retorted that he was sorry they had caught nothing—we had been waiting two hours, maybe three or four, in case they were lost. We moved on, and in a few minutes, by-passing the falls, we came once more to the banks of the Itoro, and into Kaweki's camp.

C
It was a mixture of Negro village and Pygmy camp. The clearing
177 was only some twenty yards across; on one side was Kaweki's house,
361 built in the rectangular shape of a typical village house, but with
342 walls hung with leaves instead of packed with baked mud. At right angles to it was another hut, long and low, the eaves coming right down to the ground so that the entrance gaped in a great triangle. We dropped our bundles on the ground and went into Kaweki's hut,
C calling from outside that we had arrived. The hut was divided into
[353] two by a leaf screen, the outer half being a kitchen with a drying
[251] rack for the fish. The rack was full, and a fire underneath did double
[417] duty, cooking food and smoking the fish. On the far side of the
[354] screen Kaweki lay on a bed of fresh leaves. A young Pygmy girl
P knelt beside him, gently massaging his chest. She was Hari's sister.
C
571 Hari greeted her, then went to Kaweki and, addressing him as "Father,"
177 asked him how he was. Kaweki was almost too weak to speak,
758 but he took our hands in turn and apologized for not having been able to get up to greet us. He said, "My daughter will get you

something to eat." He gave Hari's sister a playful push on the head, P C 571
then lay back and seemed to go to sleep. 177 758

Hari led us out and into the long triangular hut. We went right P C
through to the back and there, on each side, was a narrow bed of 571
sticks. Here, he said, Kenge and I were to sleep. This was the visitors' 177
hut, he exclaimed. He and his sister slept in Kaweki's house. I asked 574 C
who the visitors were, as Kaweki was reputed to have none. "Oh, 342
I don't mean villagers," Hari said. "I mean Pygmies, his friends." [352]

I had barely washed and sat down in the middle of the clearing P C
to eat the food prepared by Hari's sister, when there was the un- 123
mistakable sound of a band of Pygmies approaching. In a few minutes a score of them burst into the clearing—young men and women, laughing and shouting their greetings.

They said that they had heard that Kaweki was ill, so they had P C
come to hunt for him and make him well. What had promised to be 123
a peaceful rest in a lazy fishing camp now threatened to be something 571
very different. These Pygmies had come as far as we had, but within 574 P
minutes of arrival they were off again for a quick hunt before the [224]
sun set. Kenge himself joined them, taking Kaweki's two hunting
dogs and arming himself with a stout short-shafted spear. The P
women stayed behind to improvise some shelter for the night. But [342]
they decided it was too much work, so they just added some sticks
and leaves to the visitors' hut, forming an elongated windbreak that
reached almost over to Kaweki's house. By the time the men came P
back, empty-handed, they had installed themselves and were boiling [252]
pots of plantains and manioc, together with fish to which they had
helped themselves from Kaweki's rack. That night those who could
not squeeze into the shelters or into the overcrowded visitors' hut
slept in Kaweki's house. I myself found that the longed-for blessing
of sleep did not come easily. Kenge had, of course, found an old P
girl friend among the newcomers, and the two of them lay together, [832]

P C 123 571 574 beside me, all night long, flirting and laughing. Even though I lost a lot of sleep I learned several new facts of life.

P [832] Over the next few days I saw the hunters go off to bring back the meat that would make their friend well and strong; and each day P C 571 574 177 758 they collected roots and herbs which they prepared and gave to Hari's sister to treat Kaweki with. Just their very presence, boisterous and cheerful, was a tonic to the invalid. On the second night he came out into the clearing and lay down beside the fire, covered with a blanket. He joined in the conversation of the Pygmies, joking and telling stories in their own manner. Then he half sang and half chanted legends of the past, urged on by Hari, who sat nearby with all the attentiveness and affection of a son, smiling happily when he saw the villager that he loved as a father slowly regain his strength and life.

In a few days Kaweki was up and about, though he still tired quickly. He thanked his friends and told them that they had no need to stay longer if they wanted to go. But it was a happy camp, and everyone was in favor of staying. C [226] Kaweki had built a dam above the falls, channeling all the fish into a long wicker trap—some twenty feet of elaborate basketry which caught the fish and held them firmly in its meshes until they were pulled out and killed. But the recent storm, which had broken just the day before we arrived, had breached the dam and damaged the trap. The Pygmies decided that they would rebuild it for Kaweki, and while a few of them *hunted the rest went off and cut the wood needed, and returned to* work under Kaweki's supervision.

In the evenings the Pygmies sang songs they would ordinarily never have sung in the presence of a villager. But Kaweki was a lover of the forest, and to the Pygmies that was all that mattered. P [533] On the evening when Kaweki actually danced and declared himself completely cured, the Pygmies responded by singing a song of the

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

molimo, just as they would have done for one of their own people—a song of praise and thanks to the forest for saving one of its children, even if he was a villager.

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[533]

10

Elima: the Dance of Life

P C 177 WITH THE PYGMIES and the villagers coming into contact, both as individuals and groups, it was inevitable that over the years each should adopt some of the other's customs. The contact between them was sometimes intimate and friendly, as with Kaweki, and sometimes it was formal and hostile, as between André and Asoti. Most frequently its purpose was just a matter of barter, and at all times each regarded the territory of the other as a foreign place.

P C 177 178 When a custom was adopted by one people, they gave it their own particular character and meaning, and frequently changed it so that it was all but unrecognizable, except through the common use of the original name. Such was the case with the molimo, and such was also the case with the elima. Who borrowed from whom is a difficult question, and perhaps not a very important one. The difference that emerges in the process of borrowing is much easier to see and adds much more to our understanding. P C 177 178

To both peoples the elima is concerned with the arrival of a young girl at the age of maturity, her transition from girlhood to the full flowering of womanhood. This coming of age is marked more dramatically for girls than for boys by the physical changes that take place. Both Pygmies and villagers recognize the significance of the first appearance of menstrual blood, and both celebrate it with a festival which they call "elima." But there the similarity ends. P C 881

My friend Amina told me a great deal about the elima among the BaBira, and I learned more from older women in different villages that I lived in from time to time. Everywhere, right through to the very edge of the forest, I found the same story among the villagers. Blood of any kind is a terrible and powerful thing, associated with injury and sickness and death. Menstrual blood is even more terrible because of its mysterious and regular recurrence. Its first appearance is considered by the vilagers as a calamity—an evil omen. The girl who is defiled by it for the first time is herself in danger, and even more important she has placed the whole family and clan in danger. She is promptly secluded, and only her mother (and, I suspect, one or two other close and senior female relatives) may see her and care for her. She has to be cleansed and purified, and the clan itself has to be protected, by ritual propitiation, from the evil she has brought upon them. At the best, the unfortunate girl is considered a considerable nuisance and expense. C [115] C 881 C [226] [241]

It is generally assumed that the girl was brought into this condition by some kind of illicit intercourse, and her mother demands of her who is responsible. This is the girl's chance to name the boy of her choice, whether or not she has even so much as spoken to C 881 584 [836]

C
881 him. He is then accused and has to make suitable offerings which
584 are necessary not only to help in the protection of the girl and her
family, but also for his own protection, since he has been linked with
her verbally, however untruthfully. He may then deny the charge,
and if the girl's parents think he would make a suitable husband,
there may be some litigation. Or they may consider him unsuitable,
and let the matter drop. If he likes the girl and accepts the responsibility,
this constitutes the first step toward official betrothal. If
he disclaims all responsibility, then the girl has to try again; until she
has a husband the danger is thought to remain.

C The period of seclusion varies from tribe to tribe, and even from
881 village to village. Sometimes it is just for a week or two; sometimes
it lasts a month or more. And sometimes it lasts until the girl is
betrothed and can be led from her room of shame to be taken away
C by her husband. At the final wedding ritual she is ceremonially cut
583 off from her family, and told that she is now her husband's responsibility
585 and must fend for herself and not come running home every
time she gets beaten. The point, of course, is that if she does this
her husband can claim back the wealth he will have already paid
over in the expectancy of her fidelity and success as a wife and bearer
of children. And by the time the disaster occurs her family will almost
certainly have spent the money to obtain a bride for one of
her brothers.

C The whole affair is a rather shameful one in the eyes of the villagers,
881 as well as a dangerous one. It is something best concealed
and not talked about in public. The girl is an object of suspicion,
scorn, repulsion, and anger. It is not a happy coming of age.

P For the Pygmies, the people of the forest, it is a very different
881 thing. To them blood, in the usual context in which they see it, is
841 equally dreadful. But they recognize it as being the symbol not only
826 of death, but also of life. And menstrual blood to them means life.
Even between a husband and wife it is not a frightening thing,

though there are certain restrictions connected with it. In fact, the 881 841 Pygmies consider that any couple that really wants to have children 842] should "sleep with the moon."

So when a young Pygmy girl begins to flower into maturity, 881 and blood comes to her for the first time, it comes to her as a gift, received with gratitude and rejoicing—rejoicing that the girl is now a potential mother, that she can now proudly and rightfully take a husband. There is no mention of fear or superstition, and everyone is told the good news.

The girl enters seclusion, but not the seclusion of the village girl. She takes with her all her young friends, those who have not yet reached maturity, and some older ones.

In the house of the elima the girls celebrate the happy event together. [861] Together they are taught the arts and crafts of motherhood by an old and respected relative. They learn not only how to live like adults, but how to sing the songs of adult women. Day after day, night after night, the elima house resounds with the throaty contralto of the older women and the high, piping voices of the youngest. It is a time of gladness and happiness, not for the women alone but for the whole people. Pygmies from all around come to pay their respects, the young men standing or sitting about outside the elima house in the hopes of a glimpse of the young beauties inside. And there are special elima songs which they sing to one [533] another, the girls singing a light, cascading melody in intricate harmony, the men replying with a rich, vital chorus. For the Pygmies the elima is one of the happiest, most joyful occasions in their lives.

And so it was with happiness that we all heard that not one but two girls in our camp had been blessed by the moon.

At first it was just Akidinimba, daughter of Manyalibo's sister. 881 Akidinimba was a notorious flirt who considered herself the most 832 beautiful girl in the world. She was just sufficiently plump to be envied by less well-endowed girls, but not so plump that her maidenly

881 232 figure was lost. She was particularly proud of her breasts, which were certainly the largest in that part of the forest, and she showed them off to advantage, when dancing, by adopting an unusually springy gait. As her breasts bounced up and down the eyes of all the bachelors followed their movement with pleasure. Everyone agreed that Akidinimba's elima would be a lively one.

881 But Manyalibo's niece was in no hurry, so for the first few days she remained in the hut of her cousin, Kondabate, and there were no particular signs of activity visible from the outside.

Then we heard that Kidaya had also been blessed with the blood, [157] and she went to join Akidinimba. Kidaya was a niece of Ekianga, and she was more modest than the really shameless Akidinimba. Kidaya was handsome rather than pretty, and she had a reputation for being able to beat up even the strongest youths if their advances were not welcome to her. So the elima promised to be exciting as well as lively.

The two girls each chose their personal assistants and called in all their young friends to join them in the hut of Kondabate and her husband, Asasu. Kondabate built on a special extension to accommodate them. This was in Apa Kadiketu, and not long afterward the elima was moved to the village, where it took over Ekianga's house. Mambunia, Masisi's brother, went with them to be "father of the elima," to make sure that they were protected and properly cared for. Asofalinda, Kidaya's aunt, went as "mother of the elima," to look after the personal needs of the girls, to see that they got the right food, and generally to act as chaperone. Mambunia was a bachelor, and Asofalinda a widow.

When we arrived at the village for the close of the molimo festival, the elima was well under way. The girls had already learned most of their songs, and they were now at the stage where they were taking a more active, even an aggressive interest in the eligible bachelors of the neighborhood. In the evenings, when they assembled outside their hut to sing, they were carefully guarded by their 881 mothers and older sisters. But the girls and their attendants cast sly glances at the young men who always drew close to watch and listen. They whispered and laughed among themselves, and when they 881 stood up to dance they often made it very clear by their gestures 832 which boy had taken their fancy. Sometimes they chose at random simply to annoy a special lover, and boys often stalked away in a huff. That was a mistake.

At any time of the day the girls were likely to emerge from the [411] elima house armed with long fito whips. If you were close enough you could hear them plotting their strategy behind the door, but there was no escape once they burst out into the open. Any males, young or old, and particularly those who had shown annoyance at being teased, were liable to be chased and whipped by the eager young furies.

I myself was chased once, for a good half-mile down a forest trail, [123] running as fast as I could. It was considered cowardly to run, but I ran with good reason, for to be whipped establishes an obligation to visit your assailant in the elima house. Once inside there is no need to do anything further, but you are subject to considerable attention if you refuse. And to get into the house, in the first place, requires no small amount of courage and strength. So I ran. Most other bachelors had less reason and no desire to escape, so they contented themselves with giving as good as they got, throwing sticks and stones at the girls, running around the village, dodging behind houses and through fields of sugar cane. The battles never lasted long, but sometimes they came to an abrupt end.

The girls often whipped old men or young boys, and in either case it was generally considered a compliment and did not carry the same obligations that it would have done had they been eligible bachelors. But sometimes they hit too hard, and the old men resented this and shouted, while the boys simply screamed their heads off.

881 832 In the one case Mambunia would come out of his hut in a temper and send all the girls back to their house, and in the other case Asofalinda would run amok among the girls, boxing their ears until they, in turn, cried like the children they had beaten.

881 914 But the elima beauties did not confine themselves to their own village. After all, most of the men there were relatives and so could not decently be invited into the elima house. Many strangers came to visit from other groups, but sometimes the attendance was disappointing. Then the girls would set out to visit one of their hunting [123] camps. I followed them on one such escapade, having secured a promise first that I would be given complete immunity. It was a strange procession, the girls all oiled and painted to look their best, wearing grass skirts in imitation of the boys' initiation (an innovation that infuriated the villagers, who felt that their customs were being desecrated, and that caused open hostilities in the end), and carrying stout whips, twice as tall as they were. There were about eight of them in all, led of course by the irrepressible Akidinimba, bouncing her breasts up and down in a determined manner as she marched along the road, past the Station de Chasse, and over the bridge to the far side of the Epulu River. The villagers came out to look as we passed, but from a respectful distance. On other occasions I have seen a party such as this dive into the midst of a group of village men and women, lashing out with all their might—not entirely in the friendly way in which they would whip, say, old Tungana, as a compliment to his virility.

On the far side of the Epulu we climbed up the hill toward Eboyo, the sun beating down on us so that the chatter and laughter of the girls was almost killed. But just before reaching Eboyo we turned off, following a trail through an old plantation and into the 881 914 533 forest. As the trees closed in around and above us, the girls began to sing. They sang loudly and proudly, marching with even more determination than before, their heads back, looking at the familiar

leafy world that was theirs. One at a time they sang ribald little solos, 881
each trying to outdo the others, the rest joining in with a throaty 574
chorus that cascaded downward like a waterfall. Each girl held her 533
note as the others came in after her, swelling the volume of a great chord of music until they had no breath left. Then they all stopped together, sharply and suddenly, and cocked their heads to one side to listen for the echo sent back to them by the forest.

And so we continued our noisy, festive way, until we had climbed 881
up and down the forest paths for about an hour. On this side of the 574
Epulu the forest was hilly, and at times the path was steep and [487]
difficult. But still the girls sang. At last we came to the edge of one of Sabani's hidden plantations, and the girls became silent. They made their way cautiously to the edge of a cluster of houses built in the middle of the plantation. This was where some of Sabani's relatives lived when they were keeping an eye on planting or harvesting activities. Akidinimba explained, in a gusty, confidential whisper, that her very special boy friend, Pumba, would probably be there. She was very much in love with him, she said, far more so than with any of the other boys. And she wanted him. The only trouble was that he did not seem to want her.

Having discovered that Pumba was indeed there, dozing on a 881
chair in the baraza of one of the houses, the girls entered the village 832
with a rush, shouting and yelling and brandishing their whips. Pumba awoke with a start, but he was too low down in the chair and could not get up in time to escape. He was plainly terrified, because in her determination to get her man Akidinimba had detailed all the other girls to go for him alone. When Pumba finally managed to break away and run blindly into the safety of the hut, slamming the door shut behind him, his body was covered with long angry welts, some of which were bleeding. Akidinimba wiped her nose with the back of her arm and smiled grimly. Well pleased with her success she simply sat down outside the door waiting for Pumba

881 832 to emerge. Pumba knew that he was no match for a girl with such patience and perseverance. He opened negotiations from the other side of the locked and bolted door.

Akidinimba was in no hurry, so she carefully examined the door and the single window, to see if there was any chance of breaking in. But the door was stout, and the window was tightly closed by a wooden shutter. So she decided, with some statesmanship, to negotiate. In return for a promise that Pumba would be allowed to emerge free of any danger of further attack, and free of any other obligations, she extracted a reluctant promise that he would attend the final stages of the elima back at Camp Putnam. A very downcast Pumba emerged and immediately started complaining that there had really been no need to beat him quite so hard. The girls asked him where 881 832 5.4 the other Pygmies were, and he pointed across the plantation to the far side, where the forest stood out darkly into the blue sky. The girls told him to stay behind, and not to try and warn his friends. They then set off, this time with Kidaya to the fore, picking their way across the tangle of fallen trees slowly and silently.

On the far side we entered the forest and continued southward for a short while. Kidaya, plotting her strategy like a general, sent out a couple of scouts. As a result of their report, we veered around to one side until we came to a slight rise. From the top of this we looked down through the trees across a leafy floor, completely bare of any undergrowth except for a few ferns. Below us lay a typically picturesque Pygmy camp, shimmering in the haze of smoke from [361] innumerable fires. It was built in two circles, joining each other as if in an attempt to become one. We could hear the idle chatter of men [517] and women as they lay on their beds or on their hunting nets, dozing [231] in the midday warmth. A dog wandered lazily from hut to hut, sniffing hungrily, confident that his masters were far too sleepy to bother him. The sun, directly overhead, came down through the trees in irregular, jagged shafts, so that parts of the camp were bright,

others in almost total darkness. It must have been quite an old camp, 881 832 574
for all the leaves on the huts were dry and brown.

We crept right up to the nearest hut without being seen, and then Kidaya ran lightly across the clearing and gave the sleeping youth of her choice a sound thwack with her whip. He leaped up, [152]
not so much in fear or anger as in surprise and in shame that he should have been caught. He grabbed for his bow and picked up a small stone which he fired back at Kidaya as he ran away. Kidaya laughed with delight. This was a sure sign that her overtures had been accepted.

The whole of the camp was awake before the rest of the girls had had time to whip more than a few boys, and it soon became alive with lashing whips and flying sticks and stones. The women and children crept into the backs of their huts for shelter, while the men ran from rubbish dump to rubbish dump, gathering the banana skins they used as ammunition. When they could not find any, they used whatever came to hand. A slice of banana skin fired from a [411]
taut bow at close quarters can be quite painful, and the girls found that the boys were putting up a good fight. So they picked up a few vine baskets that had been left lying around, and using these as shields they advanced on their quarry.

The fight got more and more fierce, and at one time the boys managed to drive the girls right back into the huts. Then they stood at the entrances and fired their pellets of banana skin inside, giving rise to squeals of anguish. But Kidaya was too tough to be done down so easily. She emerged from her shelter without even a basket for protec- 881
tion, and made a dash for the nearest fire. As she bent down to pick 832
up a burning log, her particular boy friend fired a pellet that struck 572
her on her buttocks with a smack. 574
Kidaya spun around and hurled the log with all her might; then she rubbed her backside affectionately and smiled. The other girls also began throwing logs, and soon there was hardly a fire left in the camp, and burning logs were scattered everywhere.

881 832 574 everywhere. The men retreated to the outskirts of the clearing and stood uncertainly, peering around trees or over the tops of huts, their bows and banana skins at the ready.

But the girls felt they had achieved their end. Each one had marked her victim, who was bound by the strongest bonds of self-respect to respond to the challenge and brave the elima house itself. Pumba, who had followed at a safe distance, sat disconsolately on a log that Akidinimba had thrown at him in a friendly way, and he did not even look up as we left.

881 The girls sang all the way home; even when they left the forest and made their way back across the Epulu, gleaming orange and gold in the late afternoon light, they sang. They sang so that everyone should know that they were the *Bamelima*, the people of the elima, girls who had been blessed with the blood and were now women.

881 224 There were occasions when the mood was different. One evening in particular, after a relatively quiet day, nearly all the women of the group gathered together outside the elima house. It was toward the end of the time that had been set, in an arbitrary fashion, for the duration of the festival. The Pygmies felt they had been in the village long enough, and the elima was interfering with their hunting. As much as the young men enjoyed hunting, the attraction of the elima house offered strong competition. If the boys were away too long, due to pressure from their parents, the girls complained that they were not being treated properly. Everyone agreed that this was an insoluble conflict, unless the elima was either brought to an end or moved out to the forest. It was not only the boys that were away from the hunt, but also the women and girls, who would otherwise have been gainfully employed gathering and helping to drive more animals into the men's nets. And the women said they were having far too good a time in the village. So it was decided to bring the elima to an end.

During this time the older women paid more and more attention 881
to what was going on and gathered almost nightly outside the house to join in the singing. But one evening was different in that almost every woman in the group was there. There were even some women from Cephu's group, which had temporarily detached itself and was now some miles away. They gathered early, before it was fully dark. The bright blue sky was deepening without any of the wild tinges of color that so often come at dusk, and the tiny puffs of cloud that drifted across remained a shining, fluffy white, even when the sky was almost black.

The women brought sticks of fire with them, and some of them cooked and ate their evening meal right there outside the elima house; others just sat around and gossiped, huddling close to the fires from habit, though in the village it was still warm. Inside the house the girls were singing, but the women outside did not join in.
The men sat before their huts, watching and waiting. Finally the 881
door opened and the girls trooped out. The younger ones came first, 302
their bodies decorated with modest blobs of white paste made from clay; then came Akidinimba and Kidaya and their attendants, resplendent and magnificent, yet strangely shy. They must have spent hours working on themselves and one another, for they were covered with elaborate patterns skillfully drawn with fingers and thin sticks, also using the white clay. Akidinimba had taken particular trouble to paint her breasts with intricate circles of lines punctuated with blobs, something like a grapevine gone to seed, whereas the more demure Kidaya had concentrated on her buttocks, and these were covered with a hundred carefully painted little stars. Each girl had her favorite style, and each was different. They looked around coyly, to make sure they were being admired, and sat down at the edge of the group of women.

They began singing then, together with the women, much more 881
seriously than they had ever done before. They sang as though they 533

881 533 were women. They sang right through the evening and now and
then stood up and danced in a bashful circle around one of the fires.
881 They sang songs whose words had no particular significance, but
885 which in themselves were of the greatest significance, being songs
533 sung only by adult women. That was why so many of the mothers
and grandmothers had assembled, to welcome their daughters into
their midst again, no longer as children, but as friends and partners
[591] in adult life. Some of the women looked sad, for they knew that
this meant that the girls would soon get married, and then they
would almost certainly leave to join their husbands in other camps.

881 Akidinimba was very different from her usual boisterous self. She
885 was still self-assured, and she bounced her breasts up and down as
157 flagrantly as ever, but perhaps she was subdued by the thought that
she was no longer the leader of a group of young girls, but only a
young and inexperienced member of womanhood, with all the responsibilities this entailed.

881 Kidaya too was thoughtful. While the others sang Kidaya sat
533 with her back to them, fondling a large clay cooking pot. She tapped
415 on it with her fingers, keeping time to the music. Then she drew it
close and held the mouth of the pot against her stomach, bending
her head down to listen to the effect. It evidently pleased her, because
she continued the experiment by taking hold of her breasts and forcing them into the mouth of the pot, squirming around until she was
comfortable. Then she moved her body rhythmically, producing a
variety of curious sounds, not only in the tone of the drumming of
her hands, but by making sucking noises as the air was forced in and
out. When she tired of that she put the pot between her knees, and
sang quietly into the mouth of it, getting a deep reverberating effect.
This sounded so much like the molimo that the men started, and
one of the women turned and said something sharply to Kidaya.
881 Kidaya herself was a little startled and put the pot away from her.
152 She relapsed into a thoughtful mood, slowly and deliberately rubbing
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herself with her hands, wiping off all the beautiful decorations so laboriously painted on her body by her friends. When the singing ended and the girls retired for the night, Akidinimba was still as decorative as when she first appeared, but Kidaya was just a mass of streaked and dirty gray. And there were tears in her eyes. 881 152 302

During the last week the elima battles reached their highest pitch, both sides making the most of the opportunity while it lasted. The elima was, on the surface, a pretty happy-go-lucky affair, and what went on inside the hut was best left to the imagination. But in fact it all had a very definite purpose, and was closely supervised by the watchful eyes of Asofalinda and Mambunia. For the Pygmies, the elima is not just a puberty rite for girls; it is a celebration of adulthood, and just as much for boys as for girls. For Akidinimba and Kidaya certain physical changes had taken place which marked them as women, but for boys there are no such self-evident changes. They have to prove their manhood. Village boys do this by entering the initiation schools, but even though Pygmies enter the same schools, it is for a different purpose, quite unconnected with adulthood as they see it. For them the elima serves the purpose, or at least a part of it. 881 881 885 182

In the elima, the boy has to show considerable courage to fight his way into the house, after he has been invited. In the last week the women maintain constant guard outside, and they are well supplied with all sorts of ammunition. If they want to keep any particular boy away from their daughters they are perfectly capable of doing it. And when a boy finally succeeds in breaking his way through he still has to face a possible beating from the girls inside. If he has not been invited by having been beaten beforehand, he will certainly have to go through it now.

As well as this, in order to prove himself a man, the boy has to kill "a real animal." That is to say, not a small one, such as a child might kill, but one of the larger antelopes, or even a buffalo, so prov- 881 885 224

881 ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able
885 to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend
224 for themselves.

881 Once a boy has gained access to the elima hut he may flirt or
836 even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an oppor-
584 tunity for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and
such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives
two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other
881 before becoming betrothed officially. From what I was told, by older
836 men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this
elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain re-
strictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing concep-
tion, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant
in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents.
The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having
been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her
then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the
festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he
may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is consid-
ered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without
having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever
happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep
an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get
into trouble.

881 The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The
771 Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the im-
182 portant thing about any festival is that they should openly express
their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the
765 festival marks. Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the
533 dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed
as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing
881 in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,
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during the elima, they sing to celebrate the blessing of potential motherhood conferred on the fortunate girl or girls. The month or two that the festival lasts gives them time to adapt themselves to the new situation, but they have no need for elaborate ritual acts. When the girls appeared that night and sat down with the women, and sang with them before all the camp, that was a formal public acknowledgment of their new status as women. And yet the elima dragged on for several days afterward. 881 182 [885]

Part of the reason, of course, was that if they ended with a feast, in the tradition of the villagers, the villagers would be so pleased that they would probably contribute most of the food. And so it was in this case. For all other practical purposes the elima had come to an end the night they sang together. But the girls had another reason; they wanted to placate the villagers. Sabani in particular had been extremely upset about the nonorthodox way this elima had been conducted. He, and many others, felt it was wrong for the girls to go wandering about from village to village, sometimes sleeping overnight in camps several miles away. This was unheard of. It was, to the villagers, as though a colony of lepers were wandering at large. But even more they resented the liberties the girls took with village custom. There is a certain dress that village elima girls are meant to wear, because the special leaves of which it is made have the magical power of protection; other dress is ineffective and invites disaster. The Pygmy girls, however, found that the ineffective leaves were far more attractive. As they themselves said, "This plant makes such pretty skirts; why should we make ourselves ugly with that plant? This is a time to rejoice." They also liked to imitate the village boys' initiation, and this so infuriated, and worried, the village traditionalists that they threatened to invoke the most powerful curses on all the girls. And so the girls put on a traditional ending, village style, to appease them. 881 177 574 881 177 292 881 177 574

On a Sunday morning they came out of their house as soon as

881 the first light of dawn flecked the sky with gold. They went down
177 to the banks of a forest stream, where it widened out into a silent
574 pool, and bathed themselves in half-hearted imitation of an elaborate
village ritual. Then they oiled their bodies and donned oily new bark cloths and returned to dance in the village. They danced in a tight little circle while the women cooked the food. The villagers came to watch approvingly and to see that the food was properly distributed, for only certain people may eat it. They also made sure that all the leaves which had been used as a sleeping mattress in the elima house were thrown away and the house cleaned thoroughly. In this way they satisfied themselves that no harm would come to "their" Pygmies. The ancestors would be appeased by the feast, and the evil spirit that hovered around the unclean girls would be driven away.

The girls found it all rather tedious and boring, and as soon as they were able they broke off from their dancing and went wandering around the village. Akidinimba was in search of Pumba, who had failed her badly in the final ceremony. The others visited from house to house, in the hopes of gifts and compliments. The older women sat around and enjoyed the food for as long as it lasted; then they broke up and went about their business as though nothing had happened.

The men, for some time, had been talking about where they would build the next hunting camp.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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The Marriage of Kenge

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THE END OF THE ELIMA precipitated a crisis in the village. One of the many ways in which the villagers try to exert control over the Pygmies is by seeing that they are married according to Negro custom. The villager believes this achieves two ends—it subjects the married couple to the same supernatural authority that controls married villagers (the authority of village ancestors), and by careful manipulation and matchmaking it can increase and improve his own stock of Pygmies.

The Pygmies accept this, but in point of fact they consider a village wedding as no more than a formal betrothal at the most, and a

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good excuse for a mild flirtation and a great deal of feasting. If two Pygmies want to get married, and they are near a village, then they gladly undergo the village ritual, sanctifying the bond later in their own manner. Everyone is happy; the villagers think the marriage is a success because it was performed according to their customs, while the Pygmy knows it is a success because it followed his as well.

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The villagers naturally looked on the elima as a prelude to the marriages of Akidinimba and Kidaya. The Pygmies, however, regarded it in no such light. They wanted to get back to the forest, where the girls could get married in their own time and in their own way. This would involve no more than an exchange of visits between the families concerned, and the groom's presentation to his in-laws of a large antelope, and perhaps some arrows and a bow. But none the less they were tempted by the idea of more feasting. So there was considerable conflict of ideas and ideals, particularly as the villagers had their own ideas as to whom the girls should marry.

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The elima had created a crisis in another direction also. Pumba, whom Akidinimba had loved so ardently and beaten so thoroughly to show her affection, had kept his part of the bargain by coming to the elima house during the final week, fighting his way in as a man. But once inside, instead of making love to Akidinimba he paid court to Kidaya. Fortunately for Kidaya, but unfortunately for Pumba, she did not respond, and without her permission Pumba had no way of forcing his attentions further. So he stalked out of the elima house, pursued by shrieks of rage from Akidinimba. He took his friend Kelemoke's hand briefly, then left without a word. He crossed the Epulu and went back to his camp, and he was seen no more.

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Everyone was upset, because they all felt that the sooner Akidinimba got married the better. Besides, Pumba was popular—so much so that some pressure was brought to bear on Kidaya to force her to accept him. But Kidaya had set her heart on a handsome youth named Asete, who was attached to the village of Katala, several miles beyond Eboyo. So she refused to have anything to do with Pumba. 584

Since the prime objective was to get Akidinimba married, once it
was plain that Kidaya would not take Pumba, everyone lost interest
in her and returned to the problem of her fellow initiate. Circumstance
forced the issue, for while all this was going on a close relative
of Akidinimba's, a boy named Mulanga, decided to get married to
Atete's sister. Nobody saw any harm in this, and so arrangements
were pursued and they were duly married. Mulanga was quite nonplused 585
by the ritual, for he had spent most of his life in the forest 177
and knew little of village customs. He was particularly perturbed
when at the end of the ceremony his bride was seized by a village
woman and led away. He was not quite sure what to do and trotted
behind them at a safe distance until he was able to follow his wife
into the house that had been set aside for him.

Mulanga's marriage meant that he was obliged to provide a sister 583
for his bride's brother, Atete, to marry. Villagers will compensate 584
families for the loss of a daughter by the payment of money or goods,
but the Pygmies find it necessary to arrange for an exchange, so that
no group is ever depleted of its womenfolk. Akidinimba, who had
still not forgotten how she had been jilted and insulted, saw in this
situation an opportunity for revenging herself on Kidaya, the unwilling
receiver of Pumba's attentions. So she volunteered to marry
Atete. Everyone, except Kidaya, was delighted, and Atete and his
family agreed. By the time the date for the wedding was set, Akidinimba
began to have doubts and thinking of the freedom she was
about to lose she wept day and night. But there was no escape. The
villagers of Katala had arranged a great feast and this made everyone
all the more anxious for the wedding.

Atete, however, heard of some honey far off in the forest, several 585
days' march away, and at the last moment he set off. The villagers
protested loudly, but Atete merely said that the wedding could take
place any time, but the honey could not wait. As it was only a

585 Pygmy wedding the villagers shrugged their shoulders and forgot to notify Akidinimba. So on the appointed day, when the young bride-to-be had been painted and richly oiled, she set off, weeping hard, to find, when she arrived, no sign of Asete, no indication of any of the promised preparations for a wedding, and nobody who had the least idea when Asete might be back. Akidinimba brightened up at once and suggested returning to Epulu. But having got that far, her relatives decided to stay. Besides, this was Ngoma's village and they could be sure of being fed well.

585 An elderly village woman swept out a dark and dirty two-roomed
974 house in the middle of the village, and told the bridal party that they could wait there. She reluctantly went to see that food was cooked for them, and word was sent out to Asete, in the forest, to return quickly before the bridal party ate up the entire village. By nightfall there was no word, but the Pygmies decided that since they were being fed so well they would stay over and see what happened the next day. They sang for a while, but things had fallen rather flat and the singing did not last long. When the others went to sleep Akidinimba was crying once again.

The next day dragged its hot and dusty way along, and still there was no sign of the groom. The bridal party began to get as restive
[593] as the villagers, but still they decided to stay. Molanga arrived to
try and persuade his young wife to return with him, but she refused, saying she was not going to miss her brother's wedding for any husband. He retorted that it looked as though there was not going to be any wedding, to which she replied, "In that case you will have
593 no bride." This is one of the difficulties of sister-exchange marriage,
586 for if one marriage breaks up and the woman returns to her home,
585 the corresponding marriage also breaks up. Molanga, alarmed at the
602 prospect, set about beating his sister, asking the unfortunate Akidi-
593 nimba why Asete did not come, as though it were her fault. He even went so far as to say that it was no wonder nobody wanted to

marry her, the way she flirted. In other circumstances Akidinimba would have attacked her brother, for she was twice his size, but she had lost all her bounce and was so miserable by this time that she just burst into tears once more, rolling over and over on the dirty floor. The second day ended more unhappily than the first, with still no news from Aseté. The messenger that had been sent out had himself not returned. 585 602 593

Early next morning, however, the messenger came back with several leaf bundles full of honey, and announced that Aseté was on his way and would be arriving soon. Villagers and Pygmies alike began making preparations feverishly, but by the time Aseté arrived it was too late to do more than have a dance, and the actual wedding was postponed for yet another day. By this time the villagers were thoroughly tired of having to feed a large wedding party for so long, and they went through the ritual just as fast as they could. The wedding began in the morning, and Akidinimba cheered up immensely when someone pointed out to her that it is better to be married than to be jilted, particularly when you are all dressed for the wedding. She laughed and giggled all the time an old village woman was telling her, as custom demands, how to behave toward her husband, what a serious business this was, and how she would be struck dead if she did not adhere to the rules. Finally the old woman gave up and just pushed her into the bridal house, where Aseté was waiting, and slammed the door on them. Shortly afterward a rather subdued Akidinimba emerged, and began cooking her husband's supper. 585 [199]

There was a great deal of speculation among the Pygmies as to whether or not this union would last, but it was settled when one day Aseté arrived and presented his in-laws with a fine sondu antelope. He said that he was very content with his wife, and he had not found it necessary to beat her at all often. 593

Sometimes Pygmies talked about the system of bride-wealth used 000

3: Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

P Sometimes Pygmies
583 talked about the system of bride-wealth used
177 by the villagers, and sometimes they wished that they could use the
C same system. But for the villager the woman is a laborer in the fields
583 who can cultivate crops that can be sold for cash. From the village
462 groom's point of view it is important to make a satisfactory payment
as it not only enhances his prestige but also gives him the assurance
that his in-laws will be on his side, not wanting to have to return so
P much wealth should their daughter change her mind. For the Pyg-
583 mies this is unworkable. To them a woman is more than a mere
462 producer of wealth; she is an essential partner in the economy. With-
[581] out a wife a man can not hunt; he has no hearth; he has nobody to
build his house, gather fruits and vegetables and cook for him. So a
group that loses a woman looks for a woman in return. The Pygmies
P extend the term "brother" or "sister" so that it can be applied to
[601] almost anyone of the same age group, however distantly related, and
[561] this means it is seldom impossible to find someone to exchange, and
someone who is willing. But sometimes a little coercion is needed. So
it was with my friend Kenge.

P Kenge often laughed at the villagers, and at the way they sponsor
583 Pygmy weddings, even paying bride-wealth to each other—the
177 "owner" of the groom to the "owner" of the bride. He found it
186 particularly funny when such a marriage broke up, because the two
C 583 Pygmies considered it a mere flirtation, and the villagers then had to
585 fight over the necessary restitution of wealth. But he wished he had
been able to use the system to get himself a wife.

P He was deeply in love with a particularly attractive young girl
581 named Maliamo and badly wanted to marry her. He had three sis-
593 ters, but one was married to Masimongo, one was still too young,
and the third was unwilling. Yambabo, the unwilling one, was a very
determined girl, as stubborn as Kenge himself. She was quite fond of
Maliamo's brother, a slim, light-skinned youth called Tapiw. But
nothing in the world would make her admit it once she saw that
Kenge wanted to use her in order to get Maliamo.

THE MARRIAGE OF KENGE

Kenge's decision came almost as much as a surprise to her as it 581
did to the rest of us, as he was as notorious as Akidinimba for being a [832]
confirmed flirt. In fact, most people thought he would marry Biyo,
Tungana's daughter. But Kenge said no, Tungana was almost like a
relative to him, and it would be incest to marry his daughter. People [854]
pointed out that this had not stopped him from sleeping with Biyo,
but Kenge maintained that the two situations were totally different.
Anyway, he had set his heart on Malioamo, and she had set her heart
on him.

The situation dragged on for so long that Kenge began to see 587
rather more of Malioamo than was allowed by customary flirtation,
and people began to whisper. This drove him to take more desperate measures with his sister.

One morning the village camp was awakened to the sound of 581
terrified screaming from the house directly opposite mine, where 593
Yambabo was sleeping. I looked out of my window and saw Kenge 152
dragging his sister out of the hut by one arm, pulling her over the ground and shouting to the camp that she was no good and should be killed. He pointed to her breasts and said that she had enough milk to feed a dozen children, why did she refuse to marry? Yambabo was as strong as a buffalo, he continued, so why did she refuse to work? He then gave what he considered could be the only reason, which was extremely personal and uncomplimentary. Yambabo tried to get to her feet to hit him, but every time she began struggling he simply thumped her on the back with his fist, still keeping a tight hold of her with his other hand.

People came sleepily out of their huts to watch, all rather agreeing that Yambabo really should have married long ago and deserved a brotherly beating. Encouraged by this, Kenge began kicking her, and she responded by biting him in the leg. Moke tried to intervene, but it was no good. Kenge was ready for murder, and by the time he had finished with Yambabo she was a sorry sight, scratched and

573 152 [581] bleeding, with one eye swollen. And still she refused to marry Tapha.

From that morning on, we all accepted the fact that Kenge was going to continue beating his sister until she gave in, and it was just a question of how long she could hold out. One day, when her brother had been particularly bad-tempered with her she ran away to their mother's home, many miles to the east. I asked Kenge if he was going to follow her, but he shook his head. He said, "Our mother will beat her much more severely than I. She knows that [226] Yambabo loves Tapha but is too lazy to get married. All she wants to do is to sleep with him. She is as bad as Akidiniaba." And so he stayed, sitting by the fire all day in a sulk, leaving me to cook my own food and his.

593 213 521 That evening the old men discussed the case by the central fire, with the women throwing in remarks from the huts all around. They were unanimous in believing that Kenge had done the only thing he could have done. Perhaps he should have beaten her harder, 573 584 Tungana said, for some girls like being beaten. And after all, it was not as though he had chosen her husband as the villagers do, sometimes forcing a young girl to marry an old and ugly man merely because he can pay more bride-wealth than a younger man. Everyone knew that Tapha loved Yambabo as much as she loved him. He had asked her to marry him half a dozen times at least and was constantly giving little presents of meat and honey to her mother.

573 584 The next morning, shortly after dawn, I heard loud weeping and saw a bedraggled Yambabo being marched into the camp by her irate mother, Badorinji. Kenge was wandering about searching for firewood, but he hardly even looked up. He just muttered, "Now you will see, I did not beat her for myself alone."

Badorinji led her daughter by the wrist into the middle of the little village. She called out in her loud, musical voice that her son had always been a good son, a father to his sisters ever since their own father had died, and a man to her. And now that he wanted to have a wife of his own she had made him a hunting net, but what did this worthless girl do? She gave Yambabo a hefty slap. Yambabo, however, had lost all her fight and could only whimper. When she had reached her mother's village she had promptly been turned around and made to walk all the way back, right through the night. Badeinji continued, telling everyone that her daughter had been a no good right from the start; all she liked doing was eating, sleeping, and going with boys. She would do no work, and she had refused Taphu, who loved her, many, many times. Then Badeinji ended with a masterpiece of statesmanship. She said that she would betroth her youngest daughter to Taphu, which would allow Kenge to marry Maliamo, and that she would have nothing further to do with Yambabo. Yambabo would lose Taphu, and without her mother's help she would never be able to make a respectable marriage, for she had no other brothers. She could find someone to marry her, but unless a girl were given in exchange for her she would have no status and no security. Only her mother or Kenge could give her away and receive a girl in exchange.

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Yambabo let out a cry of protest at this. She said that she was tired and wanted to lie down, and why did everyone shout at her. Her mother slapped her once more and asked her if she would marry Taphu or not. Yambabo, with a final wail of protest that everyone had treated her so badly that she would surely die, gave up the battle and said that she would marry Taphu, or anyone else for that matter.

For the first time Kenge stopped trying to pretend that he was not listening to what was going on. He called a young boy and told him to run to Bahama village with the news, and to tell them to get ready to receive Yambabo's wedding party. He added, hopefully, "And tell Maliamo that she is my wife now and I want her to come here at once and cook my meals for me. I am too busy to go and collect her."

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593 He then went up to his mother and greeted her, which he had not done since she entered the camp. She put her arms around him, and it was strange to see the proud, sophisticated and very adult Kenge allowing himself to be embraced with such a show of affection. But what Badorinji had said was true—he was a good son. And he was a good brother too, for when Badorinji had finished hugging him, doing a little dance at the same time, he took the weeping Yambabo's hand and led her to the hut opposite mine, and there he put his arm around her and whispered something in her ear and he sent her inside to lie down and sleep.

584 Tephu sent word back that Yambabo would have to hurry as he was off to the forest and would not be back for a long time. Maliamo also sent a message, to say that the villagers would not let her come until Yambabo had married Tephu, because they did not trust
584 Yambabo. The villagers announced their opinion that Kenge had
[177] already slept with Maliamo so much that it would not hurt him to
[836] wait. Kenge was furious, because this meant that he would have to go through a village wedding, unless he wanted to alienate the vil-
[571] lagers by ignoring them. This would have meant losing good ex-
[439] change-friends who kept him supplied with village goods in return
[186] for a few favors in the forest. Kenge enjoyed all the fun and games of a village wedding when someone else was involved, and he was content for Yambabo to go through the ceremony, but for himself he wanted no part of stupid village customs. He was going to carry
584 Maliamo away and give her parents an antelope, or maybe an ele-
[583] phant, like any self-respecting Pygmy. He began dreaming out loud, describing exactly how he was going to track the elephant, and maybe kill a buffalo or two on the way, and he only came back to earth when I asked him how he was going to bring the elephant back to the village. He said that I would see; he was going to Maliamo right now. He set off at once. The next day he returned alone. Maliamo had gone into hiding, not wanting to jeopardize her broth-

er's chances by going to live with Kenge before Yambabo had been 584
well and truly bound to Taphu.

There was only one thing to do, so Kenge made arrangements for 585
Yambabo to leave the next day, with a suitable wedding party. They 177
would stop overnight at Katala's village and continue the next day to Babama. At this point an uncle of Taphu's died, and the Babama villagers sent a message that the wedding was off. Taphu, however, sent word that as far as the Pygmies were concerned the death made no difference and the wedding was on. Kenge did not want to offend the villagers at this stage, so he delayed a few days, and after a
respectable lapse of time he finally sent the wedding party off. But not 585
before Yambabo had had yet another change of mind. As she was [302]
being rubbed with palm oil and camwood paste, so that she would
look her very best, she suddenly reached out for the hearth. Before [765]
anyone could stop her she had covered herself from head to foot in ashes, the sign of deepest mourning. As the rest of the party had already been oiled and painted for some time, and were anxious to be on their way, there was not much sympathy for Yambabo. They told her that if she wanted to walk through the villages like a ghost they did not mind, but one way or another she was going. Masisi, who was acting as her father, gave her a long lecture, during which his wife hurriedly wiped off the ashes and smeared on more oil.

The party finally got off and had a slow and pleasant journey, 585
stopping in each village in the hopes of receiving presents of food 177
and palm wine. It stopped over at Katala's, where the long-suffering [574]
family of Ngoma fed the whole party lavishly, and the next day it arrived at Babama. Yambabo was led through the village to the Pygmies' encampment, but the villagers came hurrying after. They said the wedding could not possibly take place there so soon after the death of a relative and would have to be held in the village. Taphu wandered out of his hut to see what was going on. He was dressed in a dreadful array of cast-off clothes given him by the villagers.

585 179 He did not seem particularly interested, because after listening to the argument for half a minute he yawned and went back into his hut without saying a word to anyone.

We all trekked back to the village, and there, under the watchful eye of the villagers, the wedding began. Masisi had refused to come, saying the Babama villagers were the worst savages of all, so Mambunia came in his place. He supervised as all the wedding gifts were placed on the ground, and he watched as various villagers, each in the hopes of improving his chances of getting some meat from the young couple, came forward and added either money, ax-blades, or small pieces of cloth. There were already several pots, quite a number of arrows, and a few trinkets given to the party at Katala village. The villagers who claimed Maliamo felt that this treasure belonged to them, but Mambunia denied this strongly. He pointed out that in any case, according to their own village custom, the gifts should sleep with the couple that night. Reluctantly the villagers agreed, and Mambunia promptly scooped the gifts up and brought them into the wedding house.

Taphu was supposed to put in an appearance at this point, but he could not be found. It was two hours before he was discovered, asleep, and dragged to the spot where we were all sitting around, eating
585 and drinking and singing. He arrived in his tattered village clothes
292 but was promptly taken inside and made to change into a new cloth, put on a woven straw hat decorated with feathers, and arm himself with a new bow and a sheaf of arrows. Arrayed like this he appeared at the doorway in the late afternoon. Yambabo looked up and actually smiled. Taphu looked very handsome and imposing, if somewhat uninterested, and having made his duty appearance he went back inside and fell asleep again.

585 That night the wedding party stayed at Babama, all sleeping in
177 the wedding house, feasted royally by the villagers. The next day the
[574] rites were completed in a ceremony which consisted largely of the

formal appearance of Yambabo, standing between two of her sisters, 585
preceded by a still uninterested-looking groom. As villager after 177
villager lectured the bride, Taphu shifted his weight listlessly from one foot to the other, scratched his back with his new arrows, and gazed longingly at some monkeys in the trees nearby. The villagers warned Yambabo that she belonged to them now; she could not call on Kenge whenever she wanted help but would have to come to them. They pointed out which villagers she was expected to help when she and her husband came from the forest, and she was told of all the things they would expect her to do for them. She was finally reminded of the villagers that had contributed gifts for the wedding.

Yambabo and Taphu were led back into the house, and the others resumed their singing and dancing and drinking. Munyunga, the burly villager who had done most of the talking and who claimed to "own" Taphu and Maliamo, said that he wanted to wait a while, according to custom, and then bring Maliamo with a large wedding party to Kenge's village. But to this the Pygmies as one man absolutely refused to agree. There was a great deal of argument, and it was plain that Munyunga was determined to have at least a return feast arranged for him. Normally he would have arranged this with Kenge's "owner," but this was wily old Kapapela, the paramount chief's brother, who had already made it known that he was in complete agreement with Kenge's refusal to have a village wedding, thus saving himself the expense. So Munyunga knew his chances were slim, particularly as Kenge was no longer even at Kapapela's village and refused to go there. He finally agreed to arrange matters with Kapapela later; in the meantime he would bring Maliamo to Kenge with a small party, but he would expect food, drink, and some kind of gift. He suggested a new hat. He agreed to come the next day, so we returned to Camp Putnam well pleased.

Munyunga arrived early the following morning, with Maliamo and an escort of three villagers. He was clearly annoyed by the fact

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that only Moke and Masisi were there to greet him. Everyone else had disappeared, many of them to hunt and others simply because they did not like Munyunga. He was even more upset when Masisi, instead of greeting him first, and then the villagers, went straight to Maliamo and led her away to his hut so that she could put down her bundle and refresh herself. Kenge was nowhere to be found. Moke invited the villagers to sit on my baraza, and they made loud remarks among themselves to the effect that as I was Kenge's new "owner" I should offer them beer. But I wanted to see what Kenge would do on his own, so I did nothing, although I had several containers of palm wine waiting inside the hut.

Kenge was finally found, engrossed in a gambling game behind Ekianga's house. He had hoped that the villagers would become discouraged and leave. But after two hours of patient waiting he emerged and slowly wandered across the clearing toward us. He stopped to look inside several huts on the way, chatting to anyone he could find as though he was completely unaware that the wedding party was waiting for him. He was as slow and as surly as he could be, and when he finally reached the villagers, who by then were not even trying to disguise their anger, he just took each of their hands in turn and then turned his back on them and asked me what I would like to have for lunch.

This was too much for Munyunga, who stood up and shouted that he was going to take Maliamo back with him, that Kenge was a child who did not know how to behave like an adult. This touched Kenge on a very sore spot, for he prided himself on being extremely adult. He motioned Munyunga to sit down again, and said, "You are only villagers—Ebamunyama is a white man. Isn't it right that I should ask him first?" I hastily said that I could wait, and without another word Kenge went away. About half an hour later he returned with two bottles of beer, some dried fish, and a bottle of palm oil. He put these on the ground beside Munyunga, and then wan-

dered out into the middle of the village, where he played with the 585
children. The next thing I knew he had disappeared again, and I 177
was told he had stolen one of the villager's bicycles and gone off [629]
down the road to Katala.

The Pygmies were obviously going to have nothing further to do with the villagers, and I felt sorry for Maliamo who had come and sat down beside them in the baraza. Feeling that I was in some way [123]
responsible, I asked if it was proper for me to offer them some palm wine. This eased the situation slightly. Munyunga and his friends stayed and drank their beer and palm wine, while Masisi and Moke did their best to pacify them by offering to have a meal cooked. But they said no, all they wanted was to drink. Only two Pygmies came to join them, and then only to see if they would be offered any leftovers. But Munyunga was not parting with a drop, even for Maliamo, who continued to sit uncomplainingly by his side. When the beer and palm wine were all finished, Munyunga still stayed—angry, surly, and very drunk indeed. Occasionally he called for more to drink, or asked where his new hat was, but nobody answered him. The few people that were in the village just went their way as though there were no visitors at all. Moke was fast asleep outside his hut, and Masisi was fashioning a new bow, never so much as glancing at the baraza.

It was beginning to darken when the villagers left, saying that the Pygmies were a lot of animals who didn't know how to behave, and that if Maliamo did not bear Kenge any children it would not be *their* fault.

As soon as the unwelcomed guests had left, the whole atmosphere 585
changed. Pygmies appeared unexpectedly from all directions, crowding around Maliamo to greet her. She went to the little hut that had been given to her and Kenge and began cooking. Kenge appeared, as if by magic, laughing and telling how he had met Mu-

585 nyonga on the road, and that at the rate he and his friends were going it would take them three days to get back to Babama.

When evening fell, Kenge went up to Maliamo for the first time
during the entire day and sat down with her as she served the food
she had cooked. He brought me over a bowl and said he wanted me
to try his wife's cooking. He sat beside me and ate, as he often did,
from the same dish. I was a little curious that he had not paid more
attention to Maliamo and I asked him about it. He laughed and re-
plied that Maliamo was no stranger to him; the only difference now
was that with Yambabo's marriage to Tapho, Maliamo was able
to come to his village instead of his having to go to hers. He had
[583] given her father an antelope; why did the villagers have to make all
this fuss? He abruptly turned the conversation back to more impor-
tant things—did I or did I not like his wife's cooking? I did.

585 At the central fire everyone was discussing the way Kenge had
179 treated the villagers. They were mostly secretly delighted, but Ma-
186 sisi said that even if Manyonga was a drunken fool, there was no
need to be quite so rude to him; that Kenge should have stayed, as
he and Moke had done, and merely sat and said nothing. Mulenga,
remembering his own wedding, said that he could see no sense in a
village wedding anyway. But Masisi pointed out, "If we did not let
the villagers think that they arrange our marriages, then how could
we expect them to give us such fine feasts and present us with so
many gifts?" Moke, picking up his pipe and passing it to his son
to be filled, added, "After all, it doesn't really make any difference;
you are not married properly until you give your in-laws a forest
antelope. If you don't like your village wedding, don't give the ante-
lope."

And so, everyone agreed, a village wedding was great fun, but "*bule*"—empty. It was completely empty, completely and absolutely. With that they laughed loudly and slapped one another on the back, and forgot all about it.

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Village Initiations and Magic

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Of all the ways in which the villagers attempt to assert some kind of control over the BaMbuti, the one which is the most significant, and which they consider to be the most effective and binding, is that of subjecting Pygmy boys to the village initiation, known as the nkumbi. This is one custom which, at first glance, does not seem to have any counterpart in the forest life of the Pygmies. Most outside observers have assumed that the very fact of the Pygmies' participation in the nkumbi—with the absence of any such rites of their own—is a sign of their dependence on the village. Some go so far as to say that this participation shows that the Pygmies are devoid of

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any culture of their own. If the facts were what they seem to be these observations might hold water, but the real facts are very different.

During my visit to Epulu in 1954, I had the good fortune to stumble quite accidentally upon fresh information, which almost completely reverses the picture. At that time I was present at an nkumbi, which I have already mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, but which merits more detailed description.

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Three years had then elapsed since the previous nkumbi, in 1951, and it was time for another. The purpose of the ceremony is not only to fit village boys for adult life, making them full members of the tribe, but also to ensure the continuity between the past, present and future life of the tribe; between the living and the dead. To the villagers the dead, the ancestors, are just as important as the living, and in many ways more so; and only those who are initiated will join the ancestors when they die. Just as it is important to have a thriving, populous tribe of the living, so is it important to have a thriving, populous tribe of the dead. The dead are, in fact, living—but in another world. Regular initiations are essential to ensure the continued growth of that far-off tribe of ancestors. I have even seen a young boy who had been due to enter the nkumbi but who died just before it took place, circumcised and accorded full initiation rites before burial, just as though he were alive. In this way he was able to go to join his fathers.

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In 1954 there was a unique situation. There was only one village boy of the right age for initiation (usually between the ages of eight and twelve in this area), and his father was a Christian who refused to allow the boy to participate. Every pressure was brought on the family, but to no avail. There were eight Pygmy boys of suitable age, and normally there would have been at least as many villagers. They would all have been initiated together but in such a way as to make clear the inferior status of the Pygmies. One of the initial acts is the circumcision of the boys, and a Pygmy boy is sent first "to clean the knife.*

the knife." Then follows a village boy, and these two are bound together by an indissoluble bond, the bond of *kare* blood-brotherhood. They are mutually obligated to help and care for each other for the rest of their lives. This of course helps to reinforce practical and economic links between the two people, as a Pygmy theoretically would be unable to refuse meat to his kare and the kare could not refuse any demand for plantains, manioc or rice.

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But this year the villagers were faced with the alternative of having no initiation at all, or having one for Pygmy boys alone. As the initiation of a Pygmy gives him only partial rights, since he is not a full member of the tribe, a Pygmy initiate can never take a leading part in the nkumbi; all the cutting and all the formal teaching, and certainly all the ritual acts, can be performed only by a qualified villager. So it meant that the villagers would have to go through all the work and expense purely for the Pygmies. There could be no question of not holding the nkumbi, as this would offend the ancestors. And in any case the villagers decided it was worth while as it helped to assert their authority over the Pygmies. I heard speculative talk more than once about how an initiated Pygmy, when he dies, goes to serve the tribal ancestors just as he served the villagers during his life.

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C [186] [769]

The *makata* sticks were cut and brought out. These are a series of sticks used only at the time of the nkumbi; each one is cut to a different length and tuned to a definite pitch. Some eight or nine men, each with a stick under his left arm, tapping it with a shorter stick held in the right hand, dance around the village playing a complicated but tuneful rhythm, the different notes overlapping and combining. Villagers from the surrounding area congregated at Epulu, some of them from as far as fifty miles away, and dancing and feasting went on for over a week. During that time the boys were collected together, and last-minute appeals were made for young Yusefu, the Christian boy, to be allowed to join. His father settled

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3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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881 P the matter by sending him to a mission school the far side of Mam-
881 basa.
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The boys were not all cut on the same day, but over a period of
C two weeks. Akobo, the youngest son of Masisi, was the first to be
881 P cut, and with him were Masoudi, nephew of Ekianga. They were,
881 at ten or eleven years of age, as brave as any adult, but they were
177 157 tough children. It was different with little Sansiwake, one of Cephu's
nephews. Sansiwake was one of the most beautiful children imaginable, and as beautiful and gentle in character as he was in appearance. He was soft-spoken, and had a voice as musical as his name. His eyes were the dark melting eyes of the *boloko* antelope, as sensitive and as trusting. On this occasion they were as frightened as those of a young animal caught in a hunting net, struggling for its life. His body was as graceful and as delicate as that of a fawn, and his thoughts were only thoughts of kindness, of concern and love for his mother, Tamasa, whose face was eaten away by yaws, and for his father, Aberi, who was hideously ugly and who constantly brought ridicule on himself and his family.

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Sansiwake was the only boy to cry when being taken away from
881 his home. He cried not only for himself, but because his mother
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881 was crying bitterly at being parted from her son who was as much a
177 man to her as her husband. Sansiwake was brought to the village,
[152] and his head was shaved as the first of a series of ritual acts sym-
[302] bolizing the casting off of an old life. Then Sabani appeared, dressed
C and painted in a terrifying manner, to smell out his next victim. His
[292] face was covered with a mask, his body was daubed with white clay,
[302] and his arms and legs were bound with great bundles of raffia so that
[301] as he danced he looked half animal and half bird. With him were a
number of nkumbi drummers, beating a wild and ear-shattering tattoo, driving all women and uninitiated children into their houses, where they locked and barred the doors. Only little Sansiwake was left outside.

After Sabani had danced around him, with the drums getting louder and louder, he was picked up and carried by a villager to the stream where the cutting was to take place. Some boys were cut in the initiation camp, others in the center of the village, and some in the stream; it depended largely on the whim of the moment. In the camp there was a scaffold on which the other boys sat while the doctor cut, but down in the stream, a short distance into the forest, Sansiwake had to stand on the rocks, the cold water splashing over his feet. He was held by the arms and legs so that he would not be able to struggle, and his considerate uncle, Masalito, clapped a hand over his mouth so that his screams would not bring him disgrace in the eyes of the villagers. But Sansiwake could not stand the pain; perhaps Sabani was drunk and cut badly. Sansiwake bit Masalito and then screamed his head off, struggling until he almost broke loose. Two days later, when he was just beginning to recover, it was decided that he would have to be cut again, as Sabani had not done as he should. Shortly afterward the weakened and thoroughly dejected boy went down with pneumonia, and would have died if the Pygmies had not broken all the rules of the initiation camp and kept him warm and well fed.

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He was the only one to suffer any ill effects, and his behavior would have brought him lasting disgrace had he been a villager. The Pygmies, however, showed only consideration and sympathy for Sansiwake, and criticized the villagers openly for their unnecessary carelessness and brutality. The villagers retorted that Sansiwake's illness was only the penalty for his not having behaved himself properly.

C 881 [illegible] 177

From the moment the boys enter the camp they are meant to stand on their own feet without any help from their relatives, but the older brothers and fathers of the Pygmy boys were constantly comforting and encouraging them, at the risk of being ridiculed themselves. Masalito, in particular, was not afraid of being sneered at by the villagers. One boy, Kaoya, who was cut in the camp, was beaten as he

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866 881 made his way painfully to join the other boys, all sitting in a line on logs. Immediately after being cut they are made to sit down and join the others in singing one of the many work songs they will have to learn during the coming months. This takes their mind off the pain, which is all the more considerable because after the operation the wound is wrapped in a leaf containing a native medicine that is full of salt. Kaoya was very roughly handled, and Masalito ran up to him and put his arms around him, hugging him tight to give him strength. The villagers howled with laughter, but Masalito was more concerned with Kaoya than with them.

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C 881 Not long afterward the boys were made to dance, and then put to rest on a special bed made of split logs, laid side by side on a rough frame that kept them two feet or so off the ground. The boys lay face downward along the length of the logs, their heads resting on pillows made of plantain leaves. Over the bed there was a rough shelter, sloping down to the ground behind, but open all along the front and on two sides. From the roof was hung a sacred banana, which initiates and instructors would set swinging as an understood command for the boys to start singing. The boys were forbidden to touch the banana, being told they would die if they did.

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C 881 There were all sorts of other taboos, or restrictions. To get wet, particularly by being outside when it rained, was sure to bring death. To eat certain foods was strictly prohibited. The boys had to eat without using their hands directly, spearing the food with sticks. They were forbidden to eat with their initiated relatives. The sound of the bull-roarer, a piece of wood that makes a strange whirring noise when spun around on the end of a cord, was meant to be the voice of a forest demon, and the boys had to show due respect and terror when they heard it.

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During the daytime, when the villagers were present, either as instructors or just as visitors, the boys adhered faithfully to all these and many other rules. By their own rules, however, the villagers were not allowed to sleep in the camp at night. Only the "fathers," that being understood to mean the real fathers and the older brothers of the boys, were allowed to sleep in the "place of the nkumbi." That meant, in this case, only Pygmies. The BaMbuti had different notions. Recognizing that I was anxious to be with them right through the whole period of seclusion, they invited me to join them. After all, they said, I was really the father of all the eight boys. In this way I became one of the *baganza*, the people of the initiation.

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The invitation was not intended as a deliberate slight to the villagers; the Pygmies merely thought it would be fun, particularly as they were sure that I would keep them supplied with tobacco and palm wine and other luxuries. From their point of view no harm was being done. From the villagers' point of view, however, this breach of custom was likely to bring disaster not only on me but also on the rest of the baganza. Beyond issuing the gravest warnings, they made no attempt to discourage me and soon came to accept my presence.

So from the first day to the last I was with the nkumbi, day and night; and at night, when all the villagers had left, I learned what the nkumbi really means to the people of the forest. The moment their instructors were gone, and only Pygmies were left, the boys leaped from the bed where they were supposed to be sleeping and joined their fathers around the fire, eating forbidden foods in forbidden company and in a forbidden manner, using their fingers. One boy jumped onto a log and swung his arms around in imitation of someone swinging a bull-roarer, which of course he should never have seen. Others played their favorite game of punch ball with the sacred banana. A shower of rain was an invitation to run outside and wash off all the dirt that had accumulated during the day. The villagers not only forbade the candidates to get wet, even by washing, but they smeared them constantly with white clay, from head to foot, as a sign of their death as children. To the naturally clean Pygmies this was intolerable, and the boys were encouraged by their fathers to

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P 881 177 take the first opportunity to wash it off. When the villagers questioned them in the morning, the boys invariably replied that they had been so cold during the night that they had huddled close together, and the clay had been rubbed off in this way. In fact, the men provided blankets for the boys, keeping themselves warm by lying close to the fires. Kenge and I slept at one end of the shelter, half underneath the log bed; most of the other adults slept outside.

C 881 563 P 881 177 Both the boys and their fathers enjoyed the chance to make fun, in a friendly way, of the villagers, but that was not their sole reason for deliberately breaking all the taboos. They behaved as they did because to them the restrictions were not only meaningless but belonged to a hostile world. The villagers hoped that the nkumbi would place the Pygmies directly under the supernatural authority of the village tribal ancestors; the Pygmies naturally took good care that nothing of the sort should happen, proving it to themselves by this conscious flaunting of custom.

C 881 769 The villagers believed that the initiate, Pygmy or otherwise, is everlastingly bound thereafter by all the laws of the tribe, sacred and secular. He is put into direct relationship with the supernatural, whose representatives on earth are the villagers themselves. If any Pygmy initiate offends a villager, therefore, he is also offending the supernatural—the ancestors—and will be duly punished by them. C [753] [756] The villagers live in such fear of the supernatural, with its power to bring down on an offender the curses of leprosy, yaws, dysentery and other diseases or to cause him to be injured by a falling tree, that they cannot conceive of any initiate's daring to offend the ancestors. That is why they believe that the nkumbi gives them ultimate control over their ever-troublesome servants who refuse to behave as servants should.

C 881 563 P 881 177 It is not quite so obvious why the Pygmies subject themselves to what they plainly consider an unnecessarily brutal ritual. The trials of the nkumbi candidate only begin with the actual circumcision. Dur-

36 Turnbull E-5 (1951-1954) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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During the succeeding months—usually two or three now instead of the former six or even twelve—the boys are subjected to one form of mild torture after another. The torture is sometimes mental rather than physical. For instance, one boy, whose father refused point blank to have anything to do with what he called "an empty, savage custom" but allowed his son to enter, was made to ridicule his father almost every daylight hour. The gentle little Sansiwake, who insisted on getting up from the hard wooden bed to rejoin his companions long before he was completely well, was made to pretend that he was big and strong, carrying heavy loads and imitating the performance of acts degrading to any Pygmy, but particularly so to this sensitive child. Each boy was put through some torture of this nature.

The physical ordeals sometimes start out as games but develop into cruel tests of physical endurance. A crouching dance that might be fun for a few minutes becomes agony after half an hour. A mild switching on the underside of the arm with light sticks is of no concern until, after several days, the skin becomes raw. And then the villagers notch the sticks so that they fold over and pinch the skin sharply, often drawing blood. When the boys have become used to being beaten with leafy branches, thorny bushes are substituted.

To the Pygmies this all seems harsh and unnecessary, and as far as their own children are concerned they keep a strict watch over them to see that the villagers do not go to the length that they sometimes do with village children, even if this brings them into some contempt. But to the villager this toughening-up process is essential and does not come naturally in the course of village life. The child has to be fitted for adult life, and this is what the nkumbi sets out to achieve. In a few months a boy becomes a man, tough and strong, physically and mentally. The process is not a pleasant one, but it is the only way in which, under tribal conditions, the goal can be achieved.

The Pygmy can understand and appreciate this, but the very nature of his own nomadic hunting and gathering existence provides

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881 all the toughening up and education that are needed. Children begin
563 climbing trees sometimes before they can walk. Their muscles de-
856 velop, and they overcome fear in a number of daring tree games.
861 Adult activities are learned from an early age by observation and
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881 imitation, for the Pygmies live an open life. Their life is as open
177 inside their tiny one-room leaf huts as it is in the middle of a forest
856 clearing, and so the children have no need of the sex instruction
861 which forms so large a part of the teaching given to village boys
during the nkumbi.

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The Pygmies themselves say that the toughening-up effect of the
881 nkumbi is salutary, though they openly deplore and frequently reject
885 its severity. And when this particular nkumbi was over, the change
177 in every one of the eight boys was plain to see. But this is not their
major reason for allowing themselves to be subjected to village initiation, nor is there any question of their being subjected by force. They enter the nkumbi voluntarily because they are a proud people. They live necessarily in contact with the villagers and spend a number of weeks every year either in a village or among villagers. The latter regard any adult who is not initiated as a child; he is treated with no more respect, accorded no more privileges, and he cannot take part in any adult activities. By entering the nkumbi the Pygmies prove their adulthood to the villagers the only way they can. When the initiation was over even Sansiwake had the right to enter any adult baraza and take part in the proceedings. This is what the Pygmies want from the nkumbi, and what they get—the status of adults in village eyes.

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There are many things in their behavior to show that the nkumbi
881 means no more than this to them, quite apart from their deliberate
882 lack of respect for the laws of the nkumbi and their irreverence to-
177 ward everything that is sacred to the villager. When this particular
nkumbi was over and everyone returned to the forest, the same boys who had been walking freely among the men of the village, as men, went straight back to their mothers. They became children once more

P 881 885 177 and were accorded none of the privileges of the adult forest Pygmy. Above all, they were not allowed to take part in the singing of the men's molimo songs. They may have become adults in the village, but in the forest they were still children.

C 563 P 177 Far from illustrating the dependence of the Pygmies upon the villagers, the nkumbi illustrates better than anything else the complete opposition of the forest to the village. The Pygmies in the forest consciously and energetically reject all village values. When they are in the village they temporarily adopt its values and customs, not wanting to desecrate their sacred forest values by bringing them into the village. That is why they never sing their sacred songs in the village the way they do in the forest, and why they refuse to consecrate the nkumbi with special music, although every other event of importance in their lives is marked in this way. There is an unbridgeable gulf between the two worlds of the two peoples.

P 881 885 The Pygmies have their own way of growing naturally into adulthood. A boy proves himself capable of supporting a family when he kills his first real game, and proves himself a man when he participates in the elima.

C 563 P 156 177 During the whole nkumbi there was only one Pygmy who showed the slightest fear of the consequences of the blatant disregard everyone else showed for the laws of the villagers. That was Aberi, father of Sansiwake—Aberi the ugly, Aberi who was so often the laughing-stock of his fellows. It was not that he was afraid of the villagers as people, for after his son's illness he often used to walk right among the instructors and drag his Sansiwake away if he felt they were being too severe with him. And he was as outspoken as any against any mistreatment of the children by the villagers. He particularly criticized Sabani for causing his son's illness. Sabani and the other instructors told Aberi it was a terrible thing to do to criticize the nkumbi doctor.

Not long afterward Aberi became ill. He was so ill that he could 000

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Not long afterward Aberi became ill. He was so ill that he could not leave the initiation camp, and he slept on the wooden initiation bed beside the boys, moaning and tossing in his fever. When he recovered he said that he had been bewitched, that the villagers were trying to kill him. He even attacked his brother Masalito for having broken just about every rule in the book.

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The Pygmies practice no sorcery or witchcraft, but they know it is rife among their neighbors and they have seen enough of it in action to be uneasy about it. Aberi was one of the few who really believed in it, and who knew what real fear was. He knew fear not only of being bewitched, but of being accused of witchcraft; for his wife, Tamasa, the kindly woman disfigured with yaws, was frequently accused by the villagers. The villagers felt that anyone cursed with such a dreadful deformity must be evil. On several occasions I heard Pygmies accuse old Sau, the mother of Amabosu the young singer, of being a witch. But although they used the village word, it had a different meaning. They were merely accusing her of making trouble. They sometimes said the same thing of other old people who were, as old Pygmies often are, strong-minded and obstinate.

The villagers, however, believe that one can be possessed of a substance which gives one supernatural powers and compels the use of them to harm others. Sometimes it works in such a way that the witch may not even be aware of what he or she is doing, and various forms of divination are used to test suspects. The only time the Pygmies think seriously about witchcraft is when they are in the village, or when villagers visit them in the forest. A single villager visiting a forest hunting camp can bring his evil with him, but when he departs it departs with him.

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It was curious that Aberi, the one who feared this evil most, should apparently die by it. He used to tell a story of how one night in the village he had been going to the latrine when he was caught from behind, as if by a hand clutching at his shoulder. But there was

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nobody there. He struggled and wrestled but could not escape, and eventually he was thrown onto the ground. He suffered violent dysentery from that time on. But in spite of this illness, Aberi was still strong and healthy enough to be one of the most energetic, if not one of the most successful hunters. And so when he fell ill during a visit to the village, some time after the elima had ended, nobody thought much about it—except Aberi. He claimed that he had been bewitched, and he knew why. He said that many months ago he and two other Pygmies had promised a villager from the BaNgwana village of Dar es Salaam that they would give him a lot of meat if he let them have a sack of rice. The villager, unwisely, gave them the rice but never got the meat. After several attempts to get his due he cursed all three with a powerful curse, and it was this curse, Aberi said, that was killing him. This villager not only possessed the witchcraft substance, but he knew it and used it deliberately. He was a sorcerer. Nobody believed Aberi, however, and slowly he got better.

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One evening I met him wandering up the path leading from Cephu's tiny camp to our own, and I asked him how he was, saying that it was good to see him walking again. He often wore a dismal, dejected look, but this time his face was completely empty of any expression whatsoever. It was frightening to see a face normally full of one emotion or another so void. Even his ugliness had deserted him, and in its place there was just nothing. Aberi said, slowly and carefully, that his body was better but he was going to die because he had been cursed, and for that there was no cure. He spent a short while in our camp, and we all tried to cheer him up. He seemed to brighten after a little singing, and when he left us he was almost cheerful.

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Early in the morning, while it was still dark, I was awakened by an outburst of the most terrible wailing and crying, and I knew what it meant without asking the ash-gray Kenge, who came pounding at my door. I went outside, and in the dim light I saw Pygmies all over

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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177 the place, standing in the doors of their huts, listening. One after
159 754 another said, "Aberi is dead, completely dead."

763 Apparently he had gone back to his camp, and Tamasa had given
C 563 him a little hot broth to warm him up, as he complained of being
754 cold. He had gone to sleep, but later, quite suddenly and without any warning, he had awakened with a start, struggling violently as though trying to get up. But some unseen power was clutching at his shoulder, and Aberi gave a loud cry and fell back dead. Within a matter of weeks both the other Pygmies who had been cursed with Aberi had also died, under similar circumstances.

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177 754 If the Pygmies had believed in witchcraft, such a terrible series of coincidences would certainly have brought forth an accusation. As
C it was they never even mentioned any possibility other than that the
563 villager might have used poison. This could have been true in Aberi's
754 case—but in all three? The Pygmies shook their heads and said nothing.

P Aberi was buried the following afternoon, with villagers officiat-
177 764 ing. Sansiwake was almost beside himself with grief, and Tamasa
C had to be dragged bodily away from the grave. When the women
563 had all left, the villagers started their usual inquiry into the death, to
761 see who was responsible. They did not mention their fellow villager
764 from Dar es Salaam, the one who had cursed Aberi; instead they
[754] named Tamasa. Kelemoke and Masalito, who had their arms around Sansiwake and were trying to comfort him, turned and looked at the accusers. Kelemoke spoke for them both. He said, quietly, but with considerable feeling, "Tamasa is our sister, Tamasa is our mother. *We* do not kill our own kind."

Without waiting for the villagers to finish their formalities, the Pygmies all returned to their camps and began preparing to leave the village and go back to the forest, where such things do not happen.

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Forest Horizons

114 TOWARD THE END of my stay at Epulu I felt that it was time to get away to other parts of the forest. I had been with the one hunting group for a year, moving about the forest with them, coming in on their trips to the village, returning with them to their hunting camps. It had been a full year, and the privilege of sharing the life of this group had begun to tell. Living so closely it was impossible not to begin to see the world as they saw it; sharing their pleasures and sorrows made it impossible not to feel as they did; and just being with a people so filled with the love of the forest made it impossible not to love as they did. The more I wanted to stay with them, and them alone, the more I knew it was time to move.

P 114 I asked Kenge if he would like to come with me and was not surprised when he packed off Maliamo to stay with his mother. Nothing would have stopped Kenge from making our projected tour of the forest. We decided to circle the area by following the road around the fringes, stopping wherever it seemed expedient and set-
P [122] ting off by foot. I took a supply of notebooks and pencils, a typewriter, and a couple of changes of clothes. Kenge not only brought two changes of clothes, specially purchased at the local stores for the
P [186] occasion, but also a huge old charcoal-heated flatiron. He said that we would probably be going through large cities and meeting big people, and he wanted to show them that we were not savages.

Our first stop was the headquarters of the BaNdaka chief, at the village of Bafwakoa. It was a comfortable day's drive, and we arrived late in the afternoon, having stopped at almost every village on the way. The news of our coming had gone before us, in the strange way that news travels in Africa, from village to village. When we reached Bafwakoa, Chief Kachui was sitting out on his veranda waiting to greet us, surrounded by his official advisers and some of his family.

C Kachui was an old man, and a leper, and he knew enough of
622 Europeans not to offer to shake hands with strangers. But we had
563 met several times before, and he clasped both my hands warmly in
P 115 his and made me sit down beside him. I introduced Kenge as a friend,
123 and with great aplomb the powerful old man called for another chair to be brought. This was the first time, I am sure, that such an honor had been done a Pygmy by this severe and conventional chief. We talked a long while. I made it quite plain that he could talk freely in front of Kenge, and he did so. He said that he "owned" several hundred Pygmies, and they were really more trouble than they were worth. "Here it is, time for the cotton crop to be brought in, and
P [439] still I can not get the Pygmies to come back from the forest. They say the hunting is too good, but if it is, then why do I get no meat?

What shall I say when the administrator comes and finds the cotton is not ready?"

C 622 563 P 115 123

I suggested that he could send one of his sons into the forest after the Pygmies, guessing what the answer would be, if Pygmies here were like Pygmies at Epulu. And sure enough Kachui shook his head and said he had sent three sons after his Pygmies, but each time when they reached the hunting camp it was deserted, and nobody seemed to know where they had gone. Kenge shook his head and I was afraid he was going to laugh. But he merely said what a terrible way that was to behave, and that everyone knew that Pygmies should always do what their master told them. This surprised Kachui, and he warmed to his theme, telling of all the ways in which he was constantly being tricked and cheated and robbed by the BaMbuti. Kenge continued to look disapproving, clucking his tongue and nodding in agreement whenever Kachui said he would be justified in putting every last Pygmy in jail—when he could find them.

But Kenge proved to be more than diplomatic. In turn he began questioning Kachui and showed that over the past year he had come to know just the kinds of topics I liked to hear discussed. The fact that he raised the subjects dispelled all suspicions that Kachui might have had, and he even told us the exact whereabouts of such Pygmies as he knew he could find for us, most of whom were tending his illegal plantations. He offered to call them in if we wanted to question them, but we said no, we would rather go and visit them. After some hesitation Kachui agreed, and made arrangements for us to leave the next morning. He installed us in his official guest house and sent over one of his sons with gifts of food. He also sent over two of his daughters, and I was tempted to find out whether they were both intended for me, or whether one was for Kenge. But I merely gave them a small gift apiece and said we were tired and were going to sleep. Kenge was thoroughly disgusted and assured me that they did not have leprosy. I had a hard time trying to convince him that

C 574 P 115 123

C 574 this was not the point, and he finally just rolled over in his blanket,
P 115 muttering that sometimes he thought Europeans were as crazy as
123 villagers.

For the next few days we visited Kachui's plantations and talked with such Pygmies as we found there. But it was impossible to shake off the chief's sons, who stuck to us like leeches. As a result I could get no response at all; everything that the Pygmies said was said to impress the villagers. The only useful information was obtained by Kenge, who got into the habit of slipping away while I was "holding court," as he called it, and talking to his fellow Pygmies well out of earshot.

C 563 One thing was plain, however, and that was that no matter how
P powerful Kachui was—and it was certainly within his power to have
177 any Pygmies put in jail and flogged—he was no match for the people
184 of the forest. Kenge learned that the main group had been away for over six months and had no intention of returning yet. They were a long way off and came close to the village only when they wanted to raid the plantations. Even while we were there Kachui's sons tried to find out where the rest of the Pygmies were, but everyone protested complete ignorance.

C A few days at Bafwakoa were more than enough. With Kachui
648 lying in wait the Pygmies were not likely to tell us where their
186 companions were, and even if they did Kachui was not likely to let
622 us out of sight. He became un-co-operative when I asked to look at
563 the tribunal records, for which I had official permission. He was
123 forced into admitting that he did not consider the Pygmies real peo-
P 123 ple, and therefore they had no right to have cases tried in the tribunal. He said that any complaints by the villagers against Pygmies
C [692] were heard by him; he judged them himself and no records were kept. He made it quite plain that the judgment always went in favor of the villager. Kenge then disgraced himself by asking what happened if a Pygmy brought a complaint against a villager. Kachui

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answered abruptly, "Pygmies have no right to complain." It was obviously time to go elsewhere.

On leaving Bafwakoa we headed down a little track that led to the banks of the Ituri River. Across the river lay the territory of the BoMbo and BaBali tribes, both with unsavory reputations for cannibalism, among other things. The ferry was waiting on our side of the river—a series of huge canoes, each about thirty feet long, held together by a platform lashed across the center, just wide enough and long enough to take a truck or two small cars.

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The men who operated the ferry were BaNdaka, and they came lazily down to the river from their village. They climbed into the ends of their canoes and cast off, each taking hold of a long stout pole. As we drifted out, the leader took his pole and struck it on the bottom of his canoe. It sounded like a great signal drum being beaten, and the echo rolled up and down the river with the force of thunder. The other men imitated their leader, then began poling slowly across, singing and chanting. The river at that point must be nearly a mile across, thickly forested down to the water's edge on each bank. It was vast and lonely. About an hour's walk from the far side is the spot where Stanley stood and watched the confluence of the two waterways, the Ituri and the Lenda, and remarked that this was one of the most beautiful sights in the whole of the Dark Continent. We went and stood on the same spot as the sun was setting, and I felt that this indeed was the heart of Africa.

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Our stay among the BoMbo and BaBali was not much more fruitful than that with Kachui from the point of view of meeting or learning anything about the local Pygmies. The chiefs, Isiaka and Lukamba, both had the same complaints to make—they simply could not control their Pygmies.

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"How can we control them?" Isiaka said. "It is their forest, and they can hide from us whenever they want to. They are worthless people. They only come to the village when they want to steal."

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C 563 P 177 184 C (186) We did meet some Pygmies, however, and they laughed and told us that no Pygmy would ever come near Isiaka; there were plenty of other villagers who gave them much more in return for their meat, while Isiaka always expected them to work on his plantations for nothing. This, in fact, was the picture we got wherever we stopped. The villagers throughout the forest complained bitterly about the Pygmies, saying, "They eat us up until we are ready to die"—meaning that the Pygmies take from them but give little in return.

P C 177 439 C 829 It was not until we reached the western limits of the forest and turned north that we really had any luck. Some miles east of Wamba we left the car and followed a track through the forest. At the end of a full day we arrived at a series of old established villages of the Mabudo tribe. These people had a much more realistic attitude toward the Pygmies and consequently got along much better with them. They talked freely and willingly. They said that, after all, the Pygmies had been in the forest long before the Mabudo arrived, so they had the right to live as they wished. If they preferred to stay in the forest and live like animals, that was their concern, but if they wanted to come to the villages and work for the Mabudo, that was fine. At the time of harvest the villagers all gave gifts of the first fruits to the local Pygmies, because, as they said, it was their land. And any time the Pygmies were near a Mabudo village they invariably brought in gifts of meat or honey.

P 123 There were a few Pygmies in one of the villages when we arrived, and after a couple of days they agreed to take us out to one of the hunting camps. Kenge had done some talking to them on the side, assuring them that I was not really like a villager, but just like them, a "*miki nde ndura*"—son of the forest. When he introduced me to them he proudly pointed to the marks on my forehead that proclaimed me an adult. "The villagers call him Mulefu, because he is

tall," he said, "but we call him Ebamunyama, because his father 123
killed a buffalo, and he hunts with us in our forest."

We left early in the morning. It would have been earlier if Kenge 484
had not found an agreeable girl to sleep with, who insisted on cooking 133
him an elaborate breakfast. But we finally got away about an [837]
hour after sunrise and headed eastward. The ground was much more hilly than in the Epulu area, but the forest itself was much the same: tall and grand, dimly illuminated by the same filtered light. Underfoot the ground was even more clear of vegetation, as for the most
part we were well above the streams and rivers. It was more rocky, 484
and we passed a number of caves, where our guide, an elderly Pygmy 485
with a serious face that kept breaking out into wrinkled smiles, told 133
us that we could pass the night if we were delayed, or if his friends had gone on to another camp. I did not much fancy the idea, and on looking inside one grotto I liked it even less; it was damp, and full of rotting leaves where some earlier travelers had made themselves a bed. There was barely room to sit up, and if it rained the water would certainly have drained into the cave.

We passed several trees of a kind I had not seen before, and Kenge 137
said he had seen them only at the extreme northern boundaries of 824
the Epulu district. The roots climbed into the air, gigantic gnarled spirals, almost as thick as a man's body, joining the main trunk which towered above. Our guide told us that the Mabudo called this the "elephant tree," because they always took refuge in one if they were attacked by elephants. He dodged inside one to show us, hiding behind the roots. Even a Mabudo would have been able to stand upright with perfect ease. But the roots were close together, and an elephant could only get its trunk between them, he explained. And
then the Mabudo sliced it off with their machettis. He imitated the [522]
action, laughing at the ridiculous picture he presented, trying to be the elephant and the Mabudo at one and the same time.

Kenge asked in amazement if the Mabudo actually came so far 000

P Kenge asked in amazement
C if the Mabudo actually came so far
224 into the forest. The old man said that they did, but not very often.
[186] They came to dig traps or set up spear-falls for elephant. They both laughed at the strange hunting methods of the villagers. The digging of a trap was a long and arduous task, as was the setting up of a spear-fall. The latter method is particularly difficult. A stout spear blade is hafted into a heavy tree trunk which then has to be hauled up high above the ground. A vine is stretched underneath and acts as the trigger to release it. But the animals soon come to recognize any kind of trap and simply avoid it. We passed several, and sure enough we could see the tracks going right up to the edge, then carefully circling around in safety.

Kenge could not get over the notion of hiding from an elephant among the roots of a tree instead of going out and spearing it as any
P Pygmy would. For the rest of the day, whenever we passed an ele-
[522] phant tree he would dodge in among the roots, while the old guide pranced around outside pretending that he was the elephant, stooping down and swinging one arm loosely in front of him as though it were an elephant's trunk.

P This slowed our progress, and in the late afternoon our guide
484 suddenly put on pace. It was nearly dark when we climbed up a high ridge and followed it for a mile or two. At the end, before descending, we stopped and listened, and from down below, to the left, we heard the unmistakable sounds of a Pygmy camp—chattering, laughing; children playing and babies crying; and here and there someone singing. It was like being home again, and Kenge
P was all for going straight down. But our guide made us wait while
484 he went ahead and warned of our approach. It would have been per-
609 fectly possible for the camp to have been deserted by the time we reached it, if the Pygmies had thought that we were in any way undesirable company. As it was, when we finally appeared they all stood around in a silent and curious circle to welcome us, each family outside its hut, uncertain and shy.

For the next few days we stayed there, and then we moved on 114
from camp to camp, visiting the six or seven hunting groups in the 484
neighborhood. Toward the end we found that we were only a day's march away from Kaweki's fishing camp, and another day would have put us at the Epulu River. So we turned about and slowly made our way back.

Once we had become known to the first group we were accepted 609
wherever we went as a matter of course. Kenge, who had been extremely 484
shy and rather nervous in the Mabudo villages, refusing to eat the food they offered him, was once more his old self. He exploited to the utmost what was for him as well as for our hosts a novel situation. Generally Pygmies travel only within their own area and among groups that they know and in which they have relatives. There was a great deal of curiosity on both sides, but it was mainly concerned with the villagers—what kind of people they were and how easily they were tricked. The Pygmies that we spent the most time with in this region visited the villages only rarely, some of them had never seen a European before, and none of them had met a Pygmy from the other side of the forest. They examined both of
us with attention. They pitied me for my height, which made me 609
so clumsy, and they laughed at the hair on my arms and legs, which 123
they said was like that of a monkey. A pink face poking out from 186
behind a beard added to the similarity, and it became a standard 826
joke among them, much to Kenge's annoyance. He felt that it [825]
lowered his own status.

For me the trip was mainly work—visiting different groups and 609
taking copious notes about each. But for Kenge it was an experience 177
beyond all imagination. Not only was he able to meet other groups [114]
of his fellow BaMbuti, and many different tribes of villagers, but he saw different kinds of Europeans—missionaries, businessmen, moviemakers, "white hunters," and others. We visited the town of Paulis; it was only a small town, but the biggest that Kenge had seen, and

P 609 177 it had a railway, which aroused his deepest curiosity. He could not think why the trains were limited in their movements by the iron ? [822] rails, and could not turn wherever they wanted to. There was something about this restriction of freedom that bothered him. I took him to see a football match between the workers of a local brewery and those of a large combine store. Just before the match we had been drinking palm wine in a small African bar, and found it much stronger than the wine made in the forest. So Kenge rooted happily for what he called "Men of the Beer," but why people should spend the afternoon kicking a ball back and forth was as puzzling to him as were the captive trains.

C 609 648 574 [754] We spent only a few days in Paulis, branching out from there along the northern limits of the forest. Then we turned eastward and made our way across and down into Lese country. The BaLese are considered to be arch-sorcerers and witches, and it was with great P 177 648 reluctance that Kenge agreed to stay in the village of Chief Lupao, near Nduye. It was several miles off the road, and by accident or design it was empty when we got there. Fires were still smoldering and smoking, but there was no other sign of life. The chief's baraza, a huge edifice with a thatched roof, stood open in front of his house; the fire had been recently made up, but nobody came out to greet us.

Kenge was getting more and more nervous, and I was on the point of giving in to his repeated requests to leave and find a more hospitable place to stay, when a young man appeared and wandered idly toward us. He stopped some way off and stood there looking at C [184] us. This was a completely new situation to me, as in every other village, even where we had been total strangers, we had been almost embarrassed by the hospitality of the people. I waited to see if the man's curiosity would get the better of him, but after a while I gave up and went over to talk to him. Kenge refused to move from the safety of the car, and stood there with his hand on the door, ready to lock himself inside at a moment's notice. For him this was a

C 609 648 574 [266] P 177 648

For him this was a foreign world indeed, for these were not only villagers, but villagers who had a name for devouring corpses.

I made little headway with the young man, who continued to chew on a stick while he avoided giving any direct answers to my queries as to where Chief Lupao was. He questioned me in turn, and when I had assured him that I was not a missionary, or a government agent, or a plantation owner looking for forced labor, he wandered away—still chewing. He called back over his shoulder that he would try and find his father, the chief. Kenge was speechless with indignation because we had not been invited into the baraza or offered water to wash with. He said that even villagers did that much for strangers, however unwelcome. He was more unhappy than ever.

Eventually Lupao's son returned and said that his father would be back soon from his plantation, and we could sit down in the baraza if we wanted to. With that he walked away and once more we were alone. By now it was too late to think of going anywhere else, so we entered the baraza and sat down on a couple of logs near the fire. After an hour a small crowd of old men and children had gathered around and were staring at us silently and speculatively. Any time either of us tried to talk with them they just shook their heads. Kenge was beginning to be more impatient than afraid, and he demanded that someone go and fetch water for us to wash with, asking the bystanders what kind of savages they were to let their guests stay unwashed and unfed. The chief's son looked at Kenge coldly and asked him what tribe he belonged to. Kenge replied without hesitation that he was not of the village, but of the forest—he was a Pygmy. The young man nodded and said, "So I see!" And still no move was made to fetch us any water.

C 622 574 186

Just then Chief Lupao came out of his house. An extremely surly and untidy old man, he did not try to disguise the fact that he had been sleeping, and not in his plantation. He greeted us in an offhand way and asked what we wanted. I explained that we wanted

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622 to go into the forest to visit some of his Pygmies and had come to
574 pay our respects first. He said brusquely that he did not know
186 where any Pygmies were to be found. Then he looked at Kenge
[829] and asked him if it was usual for a Pygmy to sit beside a white man.
C Kenge countered by asking if it was usual for a big chief to keep a
622 white man waiting while he slept, and to leave him sitting on a log
574 without so much as a glass of water to drink or to wash with. At
186 that the other villagers began joining in, and feeling more than un-
P comfortable at being made the center of a fight between them and
177 Kenge, I told Lupao that we were very tired, and asked if it would
186 be all right for us to stay the night in his village. Lupao, who by
829 then was engrossed with a steaming bowl of chicken soup, said he supposed so, and indicated with a nod of his head for his son to go and find us a place to sleep.

I made a few more attempts at polite conversation but did not get so much as a look in response. Everyone was silent, staring either at us or up at the smoky roof above us. It had been quite dark for some time, and after waiting to see if the son was going to do anything about sleeping quarters, I got up and said loudly to Kenge that I was going to sleep in the car and asked if he was going to do the same. He replied that he would sleep outside to guard me from the thieves and murderers that made up the entire population of the village. This was putting it a little more strongly than I had intended, and we had now given real cause for offense. As we left there was a stony silence. Lupao refused to look up and allow me to take my leave of him. I can hardly blame him, but the tradition of hospitality among most African villagers is so strong that one comes to accept it and to expect it, and the behavior of the BaLese was very unusual.

When Lupao saw that we were really leaving in such an unceremonious huff, he called his son, who had remained in the baraza all the time, and sent him running after us to tell us that a house would

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be ready soon. Kenge replied that the car was clean, which was a 622
little too subtle for the young man. He returned half an hour later 574 186
with some food, and this time Kenge was more direct. He lowered P
the window of the car enough to say, "We people of the forest don't 177 186
eat excrement!" and then hurriedly wound it up. We passed an un- 829
easy night, and in the first glimmer of morning, without as much
as looking for a stream to wash in, we left. Nobody even came to
watch us go.

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We were so exhausted that we decided to call on the Catholic mis- 797
sion at Nduye and at least get cleaned up. We drove through the 177
little village, and on the outskirts turned onto a steep stone track P 177
that wound up the hillside. It climbed erratically past a temporary church, near which rough-hewn stones were being assembled for the building of a more permanent structure, and onto a ledge just wide enough to hold the long, low mission house and a neat terrace in front, where the ground dropped away sharply.

The welcome we got there was very different. A huge, bearded figure in white robes came striding up the hill after us, shouting instructions in KiNgwana to cook another half dozen eggs. To us he said, "You are late for breakfast." And after a second look, "You need hot baths."

Father Longo would not hear of our going anywhere else and insisted that we stay for at least a week, a month if we liked. There was plenty of work we could do and we looked as though we needed to go to church. Then he asked me if we were Catholics. When I replied that I was a not very good Protestant and that Kenge was a practicing heathen, he roared with laughter and said that at least Kenge didn't know what a mistake he had made. His good humor put Kenge immediately at ease, and there was only a momentary flicker of doubt when Father Longo called for his Lese catechist to show Kenge where he could wash, eat and sleep. Shortly afterward I heard him in the distance, telling his new companions in his loudest

C
797 and most boastful voice of what a terrible experience we had been
177 through the night before. Meanwhile, I found myself in the company
P of the kindest, wisest, and most sincere person I had met in this
179 part of Africa.

After he had seen that I did justice to an enormous breakfast he took me down to look at the new church he was building. Moslems and pagans worked side by side with Christians, breaking rocks on the mountainside, carrying them to the site, squaring them and heaving them into place. All this help was voluntary; Father Longo paid the workers whenever he was able, which was all that was expected. It was done willingly because over the years the people of the surrounding villages had come to know Father Longo for the man he was. He was not concerned simply with adding a lot of names to his roll of converts but primarily with living a life that would be an example that others would want to follow. He made everyone equally welcome at his mission, regardless of religion. Some months later, when the new church was finished, it was consecrated at a service made all the more beautiful by dozens of his Pygmy friends, who came in from the forest carrying gifts of forest fruits and flowers and danced their pagan way up the aisle. They were filled with as much joy and devotion as Father Longo himself.

P We came to know the Pygmies in the neighborhood of Nduye
114 well, but in spite of our initial setback with Chief Lupao we still
C wanted to make some contact with the BaLese. Father Longo sug-
184 gested that we try the other powerful Lese chief, Nakubai, whose
609 village was a number of miles to the north. We followed his advice, and Nakubai did everything he could to reverse our opinion of his people. He was not only hospitable, but he understood when I said that we wanted to visit his Pygmies without the restraint of having a villager along with us. Whereas Kachui and others had insisted on keeping us under constant surveillance, Nakubai even said that we would probably see far more if we went on our own. As a result we

had one of our most fruitful treks of all, learning many new and important things about the forest people. P 114 C 184 609

The terrain was very different from that of Epulu, being mountainous and rocky, with jagged boulders sticking out of the ground at crazy angles as though some great city had once been swallowed by an earthquake. But even on the steepest escarpments, where the huge trees seemed to grow out of the very rocks, the Pygmies moved as quickly and surely and silently as elsewhere. For the first time I saw Kenge in difficulty, he being as unused to this kind of mountaineering as I was. But we were anxious to press inward as far as we could, and once again we found ourselves almost back at the Epulu; it lay about two days to the southwest at most. P 133 484 P [481]

While we were in this part of the forest we heard many stories of the old wars between the various tribes of villagers, as they invaded the forest, and how the Pygmies got caught between them so that they were forced to side with one group or another. P 173 648 C [721]

On leaving Nduye we continued southward, past the administrative center of Mambasa, and when we had crossed the Ituri, which at this higher point was, in Kenge's words, "a mere child," we once more left the car and began walking. At the end of a day, having passed through three deserted Pygmy villages, we were beginning to feel dubious at the wisdom of having come so far without a guide when we came to the banks of a large tributary of the Ituri. There, to our mutual surprise, was one of the legendary vine bridges, slung high up over the swirling waters, suspended by lianas fastened to the topmost branches of the trees on either bank. I was glad that Kenge was amazed, because there is every reason to believe that these bridges, contrary to the information supplied by romantically minded movie-makers, are not of Pygmy origin. To cross the bridge we climbed up a series of logs leading to a fork in the tree to which our end of the bridge was anchored, and from there we made our swaying way across. Kenge refused to look down, and when I stopped in the P 133 361 [823] P 491

491 middle to get a better view of the way the supporting lianas were fastened, he urged me on, saying that it was not natural to be standing there in the middle of the air over a dangerous river.

114 On the far side we came to a camp, and there we found some relatives of the Epulu Pygmies, including one girl who was well known to us both—Makubasi's first wife.

797 177 We stayed there for the night and then moved on up a trail that led to the Protestant mission of Biasiku. This was headed by an American missionary, the Reverend Charles Bell, and his wife. They had been in the Ituri for about as long as Father Longo and Pat Putnam had. As soon as they heard that we were staying in the camp down by the river they made arrangements for us to stay at the mission, and without knowing that we were on our way Mr. Bell set out on foot to issue the invitation in person. I had a special reason for accepting it; I wanted Kenge to have a fair notion of the way different missions operated. I certainly had no desire to see him converted, but having given him a taste of missions it seemed fair that he should have an all-round picture, and earlier during our trip we had had an unfortunate experience with a different Protestant mission.

At that mission prayers were said in public about five times a day, mention always being made of any converts who might be ill, however slightly. Prayers were also made requesting the Almighty to provide a road into the forest so that the mission could have easier access to the Pygmies, and thanks were offered for a new automobile that had been acquired. All this was perfectly understandable to the villagers, with their own tradition of witchcraft. They merely thought this a particularly powerful form of magic. Kenge was skeptical. "How is their god going to put a road into the forest when the white man can't do it?" he asked.

But one day, while we were there, a wounded Pygmy was brought in. He had been gored while hunting and was groaning with pain.

797 177 The missionary and I were sitting outside at the time, going through his morning ritual of drinking tea. I went over to see what had happened, and to ask if they wanted any medicine. They said no, but they would like something to make the pain go away until they could prepare their own medicine. All I had was aspirin, but in any case I had more faith in their powers of healing than in mine. Kenge asked in a whisper why the missionary had not come over, but was continuing to sip his tea, keeping his back to us. I did not know, and I said nothing until after the next prayer meeting. As usual, prayers were offered for all those converts who had minor ailments, and for the new road, but not a word was said about the injured Pygmy, lying in a hut not more than ten yards away. Then I did ask, and I was told, "Why should I pray for him? He is not a Christian." The Pygmies were all standing around, and heard, as they were meant to hear. They had little idea of what Christianity was, but from that moment I doubt if any of them thought that it had much to offer them.

At the end of our stay there, the missionary asked Kenge what he thought of the Christian God now that he had been privileged to live in a Christian community. Kenge said with his usual frankness, "It is the biggest falsehood I know." And so I was glad for Kenge to meet other Christians who had a better idea of what their religion stood for, and the Bells were certainly such.

823 It was while we were with them that Kenge first began to realize that there really was another world, beyond the forest. He had often heard people talk about it, and up at Paulis the forest was thinned almost to mere savannah; but nowhere had he really seen beyond the forest. The mission was built on a high hill, cleared of vegetation so that crops could be planted to supply the mission school and hospital with food. Usually the distant horizons were hazy, and everywhere we looked down only on a sea of trees. Several times I tried to tell Kenge that beyond this lay another world, a world of lakes and mountains and open plains, but he just nodded disbelievingly. He

823 had never seen even a hill, as such. He had climbed up them, inside the forest, and had seen small hills such as the one on the far side of the Epulu, and the one on which the Nduye mission stood, but that was all. One evening, however, we were both sitting on a boulder at the highest point of the Biasiku mission, looking over the forest. To the east the sky was becoming less and less hazy, and gradually out of the haze a great black mass began to form. Kenge saw it before I did, and asked if it was a bad storm cloud. It was the vast bulk of the Ruwenzori, the Mountains of the Moon.

We never saw the peaks, but even the lower ranges towered so far above the forest that Kenge was almost frightened. He asked me about them, and I did my best, but it was next to impossible to describe things of which he had no experience, and for which there were not even any appropriate words in his language. His curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and feeling a slight hankering myself to see that lovely part of Africa again, I asked him if he would like to have a holiday and go over there, to see the outside world for himself. He hesitated a long time, and then asked how far the mountains were beyond the forest. I said that they were not more than a day's drive from the last of the trees, to which he responded with disbelief, "*No* trees? *No* trees at all?" He was very dubious about this, and asked me if it was a good country, and what the villagers were like there. I told him that it was very much like my own country in some ways, that it was very good, and that there were few villages.

This decided him and he agreed to go, providing that we brought enough food to last us all the time we were to be out of the forest. [186] He was going to have nothing to do with savages who lived in a land without trees.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

14

The World Beyond

WE STOCKED UP WITH FOOD—stalks of plantains, a basket of rice, a large bundle of manioc roots, some dried fish and a large quantity of peanuts, and forest tomatoes, onions and peppers, with which I knew Kenge would make a delicious sauce. In case I could not persuade him to use local water for coffee, all I could think of in the way of acceptable liquid was beer. 122

We drove down to Beni, where the forest ends, passing through it in a violent storm that cut the visibility down to a few yards. It was almost impossible to see the edges of the road, and Kenge was not even aware that we had left the forest. But he noticed that we were 000

000 climbing, and that it was getting colder and colder. He shivered and pulled my blanket around him, keeping his eyes ahead, not looking to one side or the other. After a while there was a patch in the swirling mist, and to our left I could see the side of one of the foothills, rising sheer and black, soon lost again in the clouds. Kenge shook his head and asked if that was the hill we had seen from the mission station. He immediately began talking about the mission, and how pleasant it had been there, and how nice it would be to go back. . . .

The rain closed in again, and it was only when we were almost at the entrance to the Ishango National Park that the weather cleared. At the check point we paid the small fee which entitled us to stay overnight in one of the guest houses and to have the services of the guides who compulsorily attend every traveler through the park, for the protection of both travelers and game.

Between us and the guest houses were some twenty-four miles of park, traversed by narrow roads made thick with mud by the recent storm. Kenge moved over and sat beside me, making room on the outside for the burly guide, an Azande named Henri. Before us the road rose up a slight incline, and all around were nothing but rolling, grassy plains. The mountains were directly behind us. Kenge kept muttering, "Not a tree . . . not a single tree . . . this is a very bad country." But I reassured him that it was a very good country, and that he was going to see lots of game. At this he perked up, and Henri saved the situation by asking Kenge if he was a Pygmy, and then telling him that he would see more game than he had ever seen in the forest, but he was not to try and hunt any. Kenge could not understand this, because to his mind game is meant to be hunted, and he started a long argument with the good-natured guide, who soon had him laughing happily.

As we got to the top of the first incline, there was a flat stretch and then a steep rise. Halfway up this the car sank down into the mud and would not move. Henri and Kenge got out and started pushing, and after half an hour of hard work we reached the top. Once the wheels began gripping I did not stop but kept going until I was at the very crest. There I stopped the engine and waited for the other two, who came running up the hill after me, joking and shouting, covered from head to foot with smelly black slime. 000

When Kenge topped the rise, he stopped dead. Every smallest sign of mirth suddenly left his face. He opened his mouth but could say nothing. He moved his head and eyes slowly and unbelievingly. Down below us, on the far side of the hill, stretched mile after mile of rolling grasslands, a lush, fresh green, with an occasional shrub or tree standing out like a sentinel into a sky that had suddenly become brilliantly clear. And beyond the grasslands was Lake Edward—a huge expanse of water disappearing into the distance, a river without banks, without end. It was like nothing Kenge had ever seen before. The largest stretch of water in his experience was what he had seen when we had stood, like Stanley, at the confluence of the Lenda and the Ituri. On the plains, animals were grazing everywhere—a small herd of elephant to the left, about twenty antelopes staring curiously at us from straight ahead, and down to the right a gigantic herd of about a hundred and fifty buffalo. But Kenge did not seem to see them.

As he turned around to look behind, I turned with him, and even I was overcome with the beauty of what we saw. It was one of those rarest of moments, which come perhaps once or twice a year and may last only a few seconds, when a violent storm has cleared the air completely and the whole mighty range of the Ruwenzori mountains is exposed in a wild and glorious harmony of rock and snow. The lower slopes shone green with the dense forest, the upper slopes rose in steep, jagged cliffs, and above them the great snow-capped peaks rose proudly into the clearest possible sky. There was not a cloud to match the pure whiteness of the snow.

000 Kenge could not believe they were the same mountains that we
had seen from the forest; there they had seemed just like large hills
to him. I tried to explain what the snow was—he thought it was
[821] some kind of white rock. Henri said that it was water that turned
[822] color when it was high up, but Kenge wanted to know why it didn't
run down the mountainside like any other water. When Henri told
him it also turned solid at that height, Kenge gave him a long steady
look and said, "*Bongo yako!*" ("You liar!")

With typical Pygmy philosophy, he accepted what he could not understand and turned his back on the mountains to look more closely at what lay all around him. He picked up a handful of grass, tasted it and smelled it. He said that it was bad grass and that the mud was bad mud. He sniffed at the air and said it was bad air. In fact, as he had stated at the outset, it was altogether a very bad country. The guide pointed out the elephants, hoping to make him feel more at home. But Kenge was not impressed. He asked what good they were if we were not allowed to go and hunt them. Henri pointed out the antelopes, which had moved closer and were staring at us as curiously as ever. Kenge clapped his hands together and said that they would provide food for a whole camp for months and months. Then he saw the buffalo, still grazing lazily several miles away, far down below. He turned to me and said, "What insects are those?"

[822] At first I hardly understood; then I realized that in the forest the range of vision is so limited that there is no great need to make an automatic allowance for distance when judging size. Out here in the plains, however, Kenge was looking for the first time over apparently unending miles of unfamiliar grasslands, with not a tree worth the name to give him any basis for comparison. The same thing happened later on when I pointed out a boat in the middle of the lake. It was a large fishing boat with a number of people in it but Kenge at first refused to believe this. He thought it was a floating piece of wood.

When I told Kenge that the insects were buffalo, he roared with 000 laughter and told me not to tell such stupid lies. When Henri, who was thoroughly puzzled, told him the same thing and explained that visitors to the park had to have a guide with them at all times because there were so many dangerous animals, Kenge still did not believe, but he strained his eyes to see more clearly and asked what kind of buffalo were so small. I told him they were sometimes nearly twice the size of a forest buffalo, and he shrugged his shoulders and said we would not be standing out there in the open if they were. I tried telling him they were possibly as far away as from Epulu to the village of Kopu, beyond Eboyo. He began scraping the mud off his arms and legs, no longer interested in such fantasies.

The road led on down to within about half a mile of where the herd was grazing, and as we got closer, the "insects" must have seemed to get bigger and bigger. Kenge, who was now sitting on the outside, kept his face glued to the window, which nothing would make him lower. I even had to raise mine to keep him happy. I was never able to discover just what he thought was happening—whether he thought that the insects were changing into buffalo, or that they were miniature buffalo growing rapidly as we approached. His only comment was that they were not real buffalo, and he was not going to get out of the car again until we left the park.

We continued down toward Lake Edward, blue and clear and smooth. The shoreline stretched across the wide plain to the east, where the distant hills of Uganda rose and shimmered uncertainly until they were lost in the south. The lake itself disappeared into the southern haze, and all along the west it hid itself in the low-lying plains and swamps beneath the hills of the Congo. The Semliki River, which joins Lake Edward with Lake Albert, to the north of the Ruwenzori, cuts through the plains in a wide gully, flanked by cliffs some two hundred feet high. At the top of the cliffs, just above where the river begins to drain from the lake, are the park guest

000 houses, two neat brick sleeping quarters, each divided into two sets of rooms, with a building containing a dining room and kitchen in between. About a mile to the east is a small village which houses the African staff and guides, and where the servants of visitors can stay. The guest houses face the edge of the cliff, which is not much more than a hundred feet away. Each has a built-in garage. Instructions are posted telling the visitor to leave his car inside at all times when not in use, in case of visitations by elephant, buffalo or hippopotamus.

Both the guide and the guest-house staff were surprised when I said that Kenge would stay with me in the guest house, instead of going to the village, but Kenge had made it quite plain that he was not going to let me out of his sight for a minute. Besides, I wanted to see his reactions. He was considerably cheered at the sight of comfortable living quarters, and after having what was probably the first shower of his life and changing into clean clothes, he promptly set off for the kitchen to cook a meal. The official cook was put out by this, so I said that I would pay him anyway, but that I would rather have Kenge cook our food. This was all right; the cook had nothing to do but sit and watch. But when Kenge brought two plates into the dining room, the cook protested violently, saying that *indigènes* were not allowed to eat in the dining room. I said that Kenge was my friend, and the cook replied that this might well be, but that he would lose his job if the Belgian park superintendent came around and saw an indigène eating in the dining room. I asked if it was all right for Kenge to eat in the kitchen. He said yes, that was quite in order, so long as he did not use the guest-house crockery. So we got our own cooking utensils and enamel bowls and sat down on the floor of the kitchen. The cook protested even more loudly at that and called the village headman over. Kenge started talking to me in KiBira so that they could not understand, and the headman

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

realized he was getting nowhere. He simply posted guards to warn him if the superintendent showed up. OOO

Before it grew dark we had time for a quick drive around part of the park, but except for a family of elephants crossing the road right in front of us, we saw no game. The guide said the elephants were on their way down to the Semliki, and that if we went straight back to watch we would see them and all the other animals as they came down to drink and bathe. I had visited Ishango a few years earlier and remembered sitting on the edge of the cliff and watching the animals on the far side of the river come slowly across the plain and down the narrow, steep cliff path to the water. Henri led us to a different spot, sheltered and hidden by clumps of gigantic cactus plants, and told us we would see more from there.

But first Kenge wanted to wander along the top of the cliff, to see if it was really true that during each night the hippopotami clambered up to the top and "danced" in front of the houses, as Henri had said when he warned us not to set foot outside after dark. I had slept outside once before and would never do it again; and sure enough as Kenge walked along, carefully scanning the ground, he found tracks of almost every kind of animal, including hippopotamus. We returned to our clump of cactus and sat down.

For the first time, Kenge spoke approvingly. Perhaps he was reassured because to the far south the great Kivu range of volcanoes had appeared out of the haze, putting an end to the lake. Behind us the Ruwenzori were swathed in a ringlet of clouds halfway up, but the peaks above shone white in the darkening sky. The air was still, and the only sounds were those of the lake birds crying as they swooped low over the water. I felt, all of a sudden, as though I was back in the forest, and when Kenge spoke I knew why.

I only wish I could somehow convey the sound of his voice—soft and musical, so quiet that I could hardly hear it. I have seen many of the forest people talk like this when they are feeling deeply. Even

000 [823] [825] the movement of his mouth and his eyes and gestures of his hands conveyed what he was saying. As if singing to himself, he said, "I was wrong. This *is* a good place, though I don't like it; it must be good, because there are so many animals. There is no noise of fighting. It is good because the sky is clear and the ground is clean. It is good because I feel good; I feel as though I and the whole world were sleeping and dreaming. Why do people always make so much noise?" And then he added, with infinite wistfulness, "If only there were more trees . . ."

As the sun sank lower we watched the hippopotami playing in the Semliki, directly beneath us. They heaved their great bodies out of the water and opened their gaping mouths wide, snorting and grunting before they sank back beneath the surface with a tremendous splash that sent waves rolling to the shore. Farther down the river two bulls were fighting, but only half in earnest. Soon they all subsided and only the tips of their noses were left poking just above the surface of the water.

Then came a procession of almost every type of animal in the park, one after the other, each picking its way with unhurried grace to the water's edge. On our side of the river they came right past where Kenge and I were sitting, down a narrow path that disappeared from sight beneath us. We next saw them as they emerged at the bottom and carefully waded into the water, looking all around to make sure that there were no rivals near by. As one group of animals moved away, another came and took their place. The elephants that we had passed on the road were the last we saw, and as it was getting dark, we retreated to the safety of the guest houses. We cooked and ate our evening meal in the kitchen, leaving the dining room unused, for there were no other guests in the park.

When we had finished, Henri tried once more to persuade Kenge to go with him to the village, but Kenge refused. Warning us to go straight back to the guest house Henri disappeared, spear in hand, running lightly. We made our way to our house and sat out on the 000 veranda for an hour or two, watching and listening. The elephants returned from the valley and walked right past us, between the house and the cliff, so close that we could smell them and hear their snuffly breathing. Not long afterward a single buffalo snorted directly to our left, and we could see its huge bulk at the edge of the garage, sniffing the mud-spattered car. Other sounds came and went, but the night was dark and all we could see were vague shapes moving uncomfortably close at hand.

Then the cloud must have lifted, for the two beacons I had been waiting for gradually came into sight, dull patches of red glowing unevenly far beyond the cliffs in front of us. They were the two active volcanoes just to the south of Lake Edward, high up between Lakes Edward and Kivu. I pointed them out to Kenge, who had heard tales of them and was surprised that they should glow so plainly at such a distance, since during the day he had only caught a glimpse of the far coastline of the lake. But just then the ground all about us seemed to shake, and there was the unmistakable grunting of several hippopotami. They must have been all around the house, and as they heaved their heavy bodies about in search of fresh grass, they made the earth tremble. It was no wonder the local guides referred to this cliff top as "the dancing ground of the hippopotamus," because as they grunted and thudded clumsily around there seemed to be a curious rhythm to their movements.

When we looked the next morning the ground, still soft from the recent rain, was churned up by hundreds of different footprints, including the spoor of a lion, rare in this area, which led directly past the veranda steps where we had been sitting.

The morning was spent going all over the park with the now thoroughly friendly Henri, who took us to places where he knew we would find different kinds of animals. I left him to deal with Kenge, and it soon became a game between them to see who could

000 spot a telltale movement first. Kenge's eyes were sharper, but he was seldom able to identify anything that was more than a few hundred yards away, whereas Henri could tell at several miles.

Everywhere the view was different, and Kenge was as fascinated by this constant change as he was by the abundance of game. The sun shone warmly in a clear sky, but the Ruwenzori had hidden themselves once more in a bank of cloud. Looking at them from the north side of the park we could see only the forest-covered lower slopes.

[787] All at once Kenge said, "I dreamed of my mother last night, and of my wife Maliamo. My mother was crying for me."

I asked him if he wanted to stay another day or so in the park, or go back, and he said he wanted to go back just as soon as he could. When we got back to the guest houses we heard that the superintendent was on his way, so we decided to leave at once rather than have any arguments as to whether it was better for a white man to eat in the kitchen with a Pygmy, or a Pygmy to eat in the dining room with white men. Henri returned with us to the entrance to the park, where he and Kenge said a fond farewell, Kenge giving him some of our stock of rice as a present.

Where the road leaves the heights above the plains and crosses
over to the forest plateau, we stopped the car and got out to have a
last look. The scene was at its most beautiful, and I waited for several
minutes while Kenge took it all in, shaking his head and clucking
[776] his tongue in amazement. When he spoke all he said was, "The
Père Longo was right, this God must be the same as our God in the
forest. It must be one God."

Our homeward trip was a triumphant one. Kenge sang loudly as we got farther and farther into the forest. He was so happy to be back that he forgot temporarily about his mother and Maliamo, and himself suggested stopping in several places, which we did.

Our last stop was outside Mambasa, where the local administrator 648
in a fit of well-meaning but not very far-seeing zeal was "liberating" 177
the Pygmies from the villagers. He did this by cutting down clear- 361
ings along the roadside and setting up villages for the Pygmies to live in, so that they could cultivate plantations that would provide additional crops for the government to collect and market. Kenge was immensely amused at the thought of being liberated. He said the Pygmies would still go to the Negro villages. Why should they work on their own plantations when they could steal from real villagers?

We accompanied the administrator, a fat and jovial man, hospitable and friendly, who genuinely liked the Pygmies. But he could not be made to believe that what he was doing was wrong. He had called various groups of Pygmies down to the clearings and talked to each group, explaining that the government would supply them with all the necessary tools for cultivation and give them the seeds to plant. In time, each Pygmy village would have a baraza, like the Negro villages, and a schoolhouse, and the important ones would have their own dispensaries. He then asked in a democratic way if they wanted to come and join the plan. They all shouted yes, to a man, and the administrator turned to me with a victorious smile of pride. He then commanded the villagers he had brought with him to distribute beans to each Pygmy, with instructions as to how and where to plant them. The Pygmies all lined up, and as soon as each had received his share he rejoined the end of the line. When they were caught out and taken off the line to their allotments to plant the beans, they listened gravely and began to work. Half an hour later most of the beans were being cooked for lunch.

The plan was doomed to failure for several reasons. For one, the 648
Pygmies are not able to stand the direct sunlight and become ill out- 177
side the shade of the forest. They also become ill because they have 361
no resistance, as the villagers have, to the kinds of disease they are 147
open to in a sedentary life. Water which the villager can drink with 164

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177 impunity gives severe stomach disorder to the Pygmy, who is used
147 to the fresh clean water of forest streams. Flies and mosquitoes carry
164 germs unknown to him in his natural home. But above all, his entire
181 code of behavior and thought is geared to his nomadic forest life:
177 to bring him to a settled life in a village is to ask him overnight to
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182 abandon one way of life, a way he has lived for thousands of years,
and adopt another. Where the Pygmies did make the attempt there was complete moral as well as physical disintegration. Not long ago a Belgian friend from the Congo told me that the day before he had left, on one small "model plantation" where the Pygmies were being liberated, twenty-nine had died in one day from sunstroke.

I spoke about the plan to many Pygmies, and when Kenge got back to Epulu he talked as much about it as about anything else that he had seen on his journey to the outside world. Old Moke summed
[829] up the attitude that I had found everywhere. "The forest is our
home; when we leave the forest, or when the forest dies, we shall die. We are the people of the forest."

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The Dream World

OUR RETURN TO EPULU found most of the Pygmies, except for 361
Cephu and his group, down in the village. Hunting had been excep- [439]
tionally good and over the past weeks they had dried a quantity of meat which they were now busy trading for village produce. Their roadside village camp had long been abandoned, and only my house there was still standing. They all seemed to have agreed that they [342]
did not want any more mud houses, and they had made a temporary camp just inside the forest. It was not far from one of the plantations, and close to a stream of crystal water.

Kenge had a hero's welcome; even the villagers came to visit the

361 camp to hear his stories. But none of his stories fascinated the Pyg-
361 mies as much as those of the model Pygmy villages we had passed
177 on our way home. He was made to repeat these accounts over and over again, giving every detail. While the younger men and women laughed until they could laugh no more at Kenge's description of the distribution of beans for planting, and how most of them ended up in the cooking pot, the older people were less amused. "But are they actually living in those villages?" they asked. And when Kenge answered that some of them were, the next question was "What if there is no game nearby?" Kenge could only tell them what the administrator had said: "You are welcome to hunt so long as you continue to look after the plantations." Everyone knew that to be impossible. Hunting is a full-time occupation, and it could lead a group away for months on end. It called for the co-operation of men, women and children. Who was to stay to look after the fields?

Other questions brought equally unsatisfactory answers, even so far as the younger people were concerned. There were no trees in the "model" villages—every last one had been cut down, exposing the huts to the full heat of the sun. The Pygmies were to be supplied with free seeds to plant, but they would be expected to produce a definite yield, and they knew that villagers who failed to come up to the mark were fined, and if they were unable to pay their fines they
[312] went to jail. Every village had been placed near a supply of fresh water, tested by the administrator himself (by looking at it—he was horrified when I drank some). But the Pygmies knew that however clean it might be to start with, it would soon be polluted; and in any case there was no guarantee that it would continue throughout the year.

361 Far from being "liberated" from the villagers, the Pygmies felt
829 that in these model plantations they would be in greater danger than
177 ever. In the forest they knew that they were safe, because the forest was theirs, but once out in the open they were subject to all the evil

influences of the villagers, particularly witchcraft. The theory was 361
that they would be independent because they would no longer have 829
to rely on the villagers for plantains, rice, peanuts, or other village 177
foods. In point of fact the only thing for which the Pygmies might really be considered to depend on their neighbors was metal for their knife and spear blades. And this was the one thing the model plan for liberation did not teach them to produce or work for themselves.

It may have been coincidence, or it may have been the result of 152
all this talk of Pygmy villages and of the way that elsewhere the 177
forest was being cut down by modern machinery to build new roads, 178
to open up new mines, or to cultivate more coffee, but within a few 185
days what had been a happy-go-lucky camp became silent and depressed. The unhappy Pygmies argued that the more the forest was cut down for roads and mines and foreign plantations, the more would have to be cut down to make more plantations to feed all the laborers. It was not a happy outlook for them. Then, as always hap- [533]
pened when they were upset, they began to sing one evening. They sang and sang, and even those who had been sleeping came out to join in.

During a pause between songs, while everyone was silent, we 533
heard quite distinctly the long-drawn-out whistling cry that the 825
Pygmies say comes from the chameleon. There was a shout of delight, and the singing immediately started again, but this time to a quite different tempo. The rhythm was given out by the sharp clapping of two short sticks which Amabosu had quickly cut from a nearby tree. They rang clear and true. The cry of the chameleon and the use of the *ngbengbe* sticks meant only one thing—there was honey nearby. Within a few days there was not a Pygmy left in the village.

Of all the many foods in the forest, honey attracts the Pygmies 222
the most strongly. At all times of the year game is to be caught, dif- 262
ferent kinds of mushrooms and fruits and nuts and berries are to be

222 gathered, but the forest gives its people honey only during two happy
262 months. It gives with even greater abundance, however, and the honey season is a season for abandoned merry-making, when even the cares of hunting become unimportant, as each individual, young or old, male or female, sets off every morning in quest of this precious gift. Above all, it is a season for rejoicing, for dancing and singing.

222 It is also a season when hunting groups split up into even smaller
621 units, each going its own way, claiming certain honey trees for its own by marking them with a vine tied around the base or with some other sign that they know will be respected by all other Pygmies. Only villagers would be capable of breaking such a trust. And so it
222 is also a time when the Pygmies tell stories for the benefit of the
177 villagers of the dreadful and dangerous spirits that they have to fight in order to get the honey. Naturally enough, then, it is a time when the villagers prefer to leave the Pygmies, and the forest, well alone.

222 Cephu was already off on his own, slyly camping near the valley
621 that divides the territory of the Epulu Pygmies from that of the next group to the west. He had relatives in both groups, and he felt able to claim trees in both territories, depending on where he thought he would do best. Those that were left split into two bands. One set off with Ekianga, far away to the north of Kaweki's fishing camp. There they hoped to combine good hunting with the honey quest.
[439] A few made a permanent halfway camp so that they could act as a convenient relay station between Ekianga and the village, using the surplus meat to obtain luxuries that would help make the season even more festive.

222 Masisi, however, refused to have anything to do with this plan.
621 The honey season was no time to be bothered with hunting, he said,
578 and in any case he was fed up with village food and village tobacco
177 and dirty village water. He wanted to forget about the village and eat nothing but forest food. He decided on an area that was little frequented. There was a great deal of dissension among those who

otherwise would have followed him without question, but Masisi was 222
adamant. He said he was going anyway; whether anyone else came 621
or not did not worry him. His cousin, Manyalibo, was in a quandary. 578
Morally he was bound to support his relative, but he was tempted 177
by Ekianga's idea of getting the best of both worlds. Visions of both
meat and honey won, and he announced that he was going with
Ekianga.

Masisi with the true Pygmy sense of drama said that Manyalibo 222
was a disgrace, and that as everyone else obviously wanted to behave 621
like villagers he would go off on his own. In a loud dramatic voice 578
he commanded his wife to pack her belongings. Within an hour or
so they set off, followed by their two children, Akobo and Ageronga.
There was some discussion after they had left, and Njobo's sister,
Teningbenge, and her son Maipe, decided to follow Masisi. With [734]
them went Masamba, Njobo's wife; Njobo himself was still in Bunia
with his son, Nyange, looking after the boy who was being treated
for severe tuberculosis of the bone. The next to follow them was
old Asofalinda, who said that she wanted nothing to do with her
brother Ekianga. If Ekianga intended to waste his honey season hunting,
he could do so without her. This somewhat counterbalanced
Manyalibo's desertion of Masisi, and everyone thought it a great
idea. She packed her few things together and set off, still denouncing
Ekianga as a fool. She carried her crippled little daughter on her side 734
and her bundle slung over her back. Lizabeti was a pathetic child
whose hip had been diseased since birth. She had never walked but
had spent her ten years of life crawling around on her buttocks, dragging
one withered leg after her, using the other leg and her two
hands to swing her body along as she vainly tried to follow other
children in their games. Mambunia, Masisi's brother, himself with
a leg twisted by infantile paralysis, went limping after Asofalinda,
shouting that he would come and help her carry Lizabeti. As he 621
left, clutching a spear in one hand, he told me that Masisi would

621 be very glad if I came to their camp; I would find it less noisy than Ekianga's.

I asked Kenge what he wanted to do, and without hesitation he said he was going to follow Masisi. Maipe was his half-brother, and a very good friend of his, but his main reason, he said, was that he was tired of noise. He knew that Masisi's camp would be a quiet one, with lots and lots of singing and dancing. To the Pygmy, noise is synonymous with trouble, with dispute and discontent; music is never referred to as noise, but rather as "rejoicing." I felt that Kenge was right, and we decided to follow the next day. [114]

114 It was, I knew, to be my last trek into the forest with the people I had come to think of as such close friends, and even though I still had another two months to spend with them I was sad. It was partly because of this, and partly because, like Kenge, I was so profoundly content to be back in our own part of the forest, that I found the forest more beautiful than it had ever been. Kenge said it was just because it was the honey season, but as we passed the plantation and entered once more into the shade of the great friendly old trees, he added, "This is the *real* world . . . this is a good world, our forest."

We walked slowly, enjoying every minute. We passed through the plantation that Njobo and Masisi had begun to cultivate more than a year and a half earlier, and found it a ruin, happily abandoned for more worthwhile things. We skirted Apa Muhoko because Kenge said Cephu had camped there recently and it would be full of jiggers. In the deserted remains of Apa Kadiketu we stopped for a rest, sitting on a log that had once resounded to the hammering of ivory barkcloth beaters. I thought of the great molimo songs that had been sung there, and wondered if I would hear them again before I left. Beyond Apa Kadiketu we followed the path to Apa Lelo, almost to the spot where I had once seen a leopard crouching up in the trees above me. There we turned west, following an animal trail that was narrow and tangled. It led through hilly country completely new to me and finally brought us down to a swampy region, dark and dank. 114 A stream flowed through the middle, fed by innumerable tiny rivulets from the hills all around. We picked our way across, balancing on fallen tree trunks and jumping from log to log. As we began to climb a steep hill on the far side I heard the telltale sound of bark cloth being pounded into shape, the cheerful shouting of women as they called to each other while they finished the building of their huts, and an occasional outburst of song, sung for no other reason than that this was the honey season, the season to be happy, the season to rejoice. Kenge gave a loud whoop of pleasure and darted [152] among the trees like a young antelope, leaping and bounding out of sight. When I reached the clearing he was already sitting down, his face buried in a sticky mongongo leaf dripping with rich brown honey. He looked up and laughed.

The camp was called Apa Toangbe, the *toangbe* being a special 361 kind of honey tree. It was built halfway up a fairly high hill, on a [192] patch of ground that was not quite level. Masisi's house was at the highest point of the tiny clearing, with Asofalinda to one side and Maipe's mother to the other. Masamba had built a house that virtually joined onto that of Masisi. Mine was halfway up the slope on the other side, facing across to Maipe. It was all ready when we arrived, the only one completely finished. Masisi proudly led me to it and inspected it with me. He had built the bed himself, carefully [352] refraining from turning the ends of the branches up sharply as Pygmies seem to think should be done, so that the bed becomes the shape of a hammock without any of its back-saving resilience.

It was not thirty feet from one side of the camp to the other, and 000 the forest closed in a protective wall all around us. Kenge and I set off to see what the surrounding country was like, and soon we were far beyond the sounds of any voices other than our own. Everywhere we went we saw mushrooms and nuts and berries, and we collected

000 all we could carry to bring back for dinner. The hill was ringed with streams, each one fresh and clear until it reached the swamp.

On the way back, having made a complete circuit, we were just nearing the camp when I noticed a huge old tree, one of those with great buttress roots joining the trunk some fifteen feet above the ground. It was completely dead, standing up white and naked among all the greenery, its lifelessness seeming all the more pitiable in the midst of such luxuriance. Most of its branches had already come crashing down, and only one or two jagged stumps were still jutting out from the main body. Kenge gave it a critical look; then peered in the direction of the camp a few yards below. "It should just miss our house!" he said quite seriously.

As a matter of fact it did. One night we were awakened by a sharp cracking sound, followed by a loud groan. This was repeated, and after a while a number of Pygmies, each with a flaming brand in his hands, stood out in the clearing, listening. "It's not going to fall yet," they said, and went back to sleep. Kenge had not even bothered to get up, but I could not sleep. I must have laid there for a couple of hours, listening to cracks as sharp as a rifle going off, and the intermittent groaning. Then the groaning got louder and more continuous, and in a flash Kenge was up and outside, yelling at me to follow. Just as I cleared the doorway the old tree came down, slowly and reluctantly, clutching at all the lesser trees that stood in its way. They were living, and it was dead, but it smashed its way on downward to the ground. The tremendous din of its collapse was followed by a light pattering of broken branches and twigs, and then silence. Kenge said, "You see, it did miss our house." So it had, by no more than six feet.

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For the first day or two I noticed the children playing in a vine swing that they had rigged up for themselves, and I watched the crippled Lizabeti as she eyed them longingly. Several times, when the other children had gone scampering off into the forest I saw her

pull herself over to the swing, slowly and painfully, and hoist herself 824 524
almost upright by catching onto the vine with her hands, using what 734
strength she had left in her good leg, which was fast withering
through lack of use. It suddenly occurred to me to ask Kenge why 734
Pygmies never made crutches. He said that they either got better 481
with the use of a stick, or else they just crawled until they died. 123
"What good is anyone who can't walk?" he asked.

I went to Asofalinda and asked her if she would let me try to teach
Lizabeti to walk on crutches. The old woman was in one of her most [152]
truculent moods and severely said no. The white doctor had tried once, and Lizabeti had only got worse. Besides, the one leg was completely disjointed now, she said, and the other would be equally useless soon. I tried to explain that I was not going to try to cure the girl but just to help her get around more easily. Asofalinda asked me what crutches were like, but then she immediately became severe again and said that everyone knew it was impossible to walk on one leg.

I went off into the forest with Kenge and we cut two pairs of crutches, carefully choosing sticks with a wide fork that would not pinch under the arm. Then we cut a third pair, the right size for Lizabeti. We padded the forks with leaves. I showed Kenge how to use them, holding one leg doubled up behind me. He was delighted and was soon swinging himself unsteadily over the ground. When I thought that we both had had enough practice we returned to the camp and showed the sticks to Asofalinda, explaining them to her. We then performed, circling the camp twice without mishap. By this time the children were shrieking encouragement, and parents came running to see what the noise was all about. We performed once again for Masisi. When Asofalinda still hesitated Masisi simply went into her hut, grabbed the terrified Lizabeti and carried her outside. He told Asofalinda that this was not medicine, it was just common

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123 sense, and she must not refuse. Did she want her child to die like other cripples who had been unable to fend for themselves?

Reluctantly she agreed, but Lizabeti, as soon as I reached for her, burst into tears and dragged herself back into the farthest corner of her mother's hut. Masisi started to go in after her again, but Kenge called to him to leave her alone, and handed his crutches and those we had made for Lizabeti to the eagerly waiting children. Soon it was the most popular game in the camp. Even Masisi and Maipe tried "walking on one leg." I saw Lizabeti's tear-stained face peering from the door of her hut to watch.

The next morning Asofalinda came over to me and said that Lizabeti wanted to try this new game, but if she fell once she would never be allowed to try again. Not a soul left the camp that morning; they all wanted to see what would happen. Between us Kenge and I lifted the girl, who was bravely trying not to cry, and put the crutches under her arms. We showed her how to hold them with her hands at the sides, and how to take the weight off her good leg and swing it backward and forward. The greatest difficulty was getting her to trust that leg enough to move her crutches on in front of her. But little by little, moving one crutch at a time, she got more confidence. I went in front to catch her if she fell, and Kenge held her lightly around the waist from behind. Lizabeti began to walk. Kenge let go, and then, as she realized that Kenge was not even holding her, that she was actually walking upright, like the other children she had watched from the ground all her life, her face became contorted with fear and she stumbled. Kenge caught her just in time. He swung her high into the air with a triumphant shout to drown her wails of terror, and all the children joined in, laughing and chanting their congratulations.

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152 We had almost completed a circle of the camp, and I looked over to see if Asofalinda had noticed Lizabeti start to fall. I was just in time to see her bury her face in her hands, her whole body shaking as she

sobbed her heart out—probably for the first time in her wonderful, 734 481
hard-bitten old life. 123

The days that followed were full of happiness for everyone. Once [152]
Lizabeti got over her fright I made her practice regularly, to give her more strength in her good leg. She was soon able to stand up by herself, using the crutches for a lever. Not once did she fall. And the other children cut themselves crutches so that they could join in the fun, and together they found a new world of delight. When I was not coaxing Lizabeti to use her crutches more and more, someone else was, for everyone was anxious to see her fly over the ground just like Kenge, who by now was a master acrobat on his crutches, from which he refused to be parted.

In other respects, however, the camp became less pleasant, at any 222
rate for me. The bees began to come in droves after their stolen honey. All day long they buzzed angrily around, so that we kept smoky fires in our huts night and day.

Almost every hour someone returned from a secret forage, with leaf bundles tied to his belt, dripping the sticky liquid down his legs. Sometimes it was too liquefied to be eaten, and then the whole bundle was simply dipped into a bowl of clear forest water, making a
sweet-tasting drink. But far more popular was the whole comb which 222
could be eaten grubs, larvae, bees and all. If it was very hard, it was 262
first softened over the fire, and this made the grubs squirm more actively so that the honey worked its own way down your throat. It was, however, the best-tasting honey of all, despite the insects.

Apuma was yet another kind of honey, which came later in the
season. It was full of grubs too, but they were all dead, and the
honey had fermented. It was made by a different kind of bee and [273]
tasted like a bitter liqueur; if eaten in any quantity it could be highly
intoxicating. But the Pygmy needs no stimulant in the honey sea- 222
son. He is drunk with the forest, with its beauty and abundance, 527
and with the love it showers on its people. Every night that tiny 517 [533]

222 527 camp resounded to songs of joy and praise, accompanied by the ringing
517 of the ngbengbe sticks as they were clapped together in complex
[533] cross rhythms by boys and girls alike. Every night Masisi told his group, which had steadily grown ever since the beginning, stories
[825] about the past. And every night we went to bed content, knowing that the morrow would be even better; for each day we discovered fresh growths of mushrooms, trees full of different kinds of nuts, and each night the chameleon gave its long, sad cry, to tell us that on the morrow we would have more honey.

222 One night in particular will always live for me, because that night
535 I think I learned just how far away we civilized human beings have
517 drifted from reality. The moon was full, so the dancing had gone on for longer than usual. Just before going to sleep I was standing outside my hut when I heard a curious noise from the nearby children's bopi. This surprised me, because at nighttime the Pygmies generally never set foot outside the main camp. I wandered over to see what it was.

[301] There, in the tiny clearing, splashed with silver, was the sophisticated Kenge, clad in bark cloth, adorned with leaves, with a flower stuck in his hair. He was all alone, dancing around and singing softly to himself as he gazed up at the treetops.

Now Kenge was the biggest flirt for miles, so, after watching a while, I came into the clearing and asked, jokingly, why he was dancing alone. He stopped, turned slowly around and looked at me as though I was the biggest fool he had ever seen; and he was plainly surprised by my stupidity.

[778] "But I'm *not* dancing alone," he said. "I am dancing with the
[821] forest, dancing with the moon." Then, with the utmost unconcern, he ignored me and continued his dance of love and life.

621 As the weeks went by, however, a note of dissatisfaction stirred
578 in the camp. Masisi began to complain that the others, including
602 224 Manyalibo, were way off to the north getting meat, yet they had

sent him, their own brother, none. And why did they not come and join him? I expect that Ekianga was saying the same thing about Masisi in the south, with all his honey.

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One day I decided to go and see for myself. With Kenge I set off early in the morning, but after several hours of rapid trekking we came to a deserted camp. The fires still smoked, and it had obviously not been long abandoned. We scavenged around and found two spears and a bow and some arrows that had been left behind, presumably in the hurry to get away before we arrived. There were also several baskets and pots. Armed with the more worthwhile trophies we returned to Apa Toangbe. Masisi was wild with fury at this deliberate insult. He told Kenge and me to go off again the next day and find the others, and bring him back some meat.

We found them a considerable distance away. They were thoroughly surprised, having thought we would have been shaken off and discouraged. They hurriedly tried to conceal the great amount of dried meat that had been accumulating, but they could not hide it all. So they criticized Kenge for having been so mistrustful as to sneak up on them silently from the side, instead of using the main trail.

Kenge replied that in our experience we found that main trails only led to deserted camps. He then delivered Masisi's comments in full. The comments were pithy, and Kenge added his own embellishments. He dwelt mainly on family loyalties. There was no doubt that Manyalibo was wrong; he had even taken Masisi's hunting net, promising to send meat, and had never sent any. Njobo's net was there, too, yet his sister, Maipe's mother, had received none of the meat it had trapped. Ekianga himself had sent no meat to Asofalinda.

I had expected a spirited defense, but Manyalibo slowly came out of his hut, where he was hiding, and said grandly that we could take all his meat back to Masisi; he had had enough, and anyway he had really been saving it for his "brother." He added that as for

621 578 joining Masisi, there was not much sense doing that now, as every-
224 one would probably be moving camp soon. Why didn't we all meet
[602] later somewhere near Apa Kadiketu?

Kenge and I returned, laden down with meat and protestations
of friendship. Much the same thing happened when Masisi thought
he would try similar tactics on Cephu. This time I went with Kele-
moke, who had come to stay with us because he said he found
Cephu's camp far too noisy. It was not much more than three hours
away, and it was plain that Cephu had settled in well with his friends
and relatives, because he was almost in the middle of a large and
[574] industrious camp. Everyone seemed to be eating well, and Cephu of-
fered us food, which was unusual for him. He did not part with any
meat—he had already heard of our haul at Ekianga's camp and
asked why we had brought him none. I told him that Masisi thought
it would be a good thing if he joined us and the others, and that he
would get plenty of meat then. Cephu said he would think about it,
but he was offended that we had brought him nothing.

Masisi pondered over these things for several days, and our evenings became interspersed with brief arguments between him and Mambunia and Kelemoke as to what they should do. Everyone was beginning to be hungry for meat again, and although Ekianga and Manyalibo had promised to send our nets back, they never did. We did not have enough people in our own camp to make a successful hunt. In the end Masisi made up his mind to steal a march on the others and get to Apa Kadiketu before they did. By this time we had been joined by a number of bachelors from both the other camps, and also by a third group of distant in-laws of Masisi, all of whom had learned that we were getting a great deal of honey.

621 On our way to Apa Kadiketu we heard news that brought matters
628 to a head. We met Madyadya coming hotfoot from the direction of
the village to warn Ekianga that a group of foreign Pygmies from
the other side of the Epulu had invaded our territory and were steal-

ing all our honey to the east. Masisi immediately sent his son with 621
Madyadya to tell Manyalibo to forget the quarrel about the nets and 628
come and join him at once at Apa Kadiketu so that we could all
make war on the other Pygmies together. He also sent Kelemoke
with the same message to Cephu. We pressed on and built our camp
in a hum of excitement.

Kenge saw that I was taking this all very seriously, and he led me to one side. "Old Masisi's head is unsteady," he said. "It has worms in it. He will fight only with words. Every year those Pygmies come into our land and we go into theirs. There is plenty of food; so long as we do not meet there is no fighting. If we do meet, then those who are not in their own land run away and leave behind whatever they have stolen. That is the only way we ever fight—we are not villagers."

But it was a wonderful fight of words, particularly when Ekianga 621
and the others joined us. There was so much disagreement that 578
Masisi said he was not ready to live in the same camp with them
yet, and he removed himself to another camp about half a mile away.
Cephu, still not sure which way the wind was blowing, camped between the two, and to one side, making a perfect triangle. For a
whole week messengers were being sent back and forth. Eventually [628]
the invaders, presumably having had their fill of honey, retreated
across the Epulu, declaring that never again would they enter such
inhospitable territory.

But everyone was far too busy scouring the countryside and mark- 621
ing out new honey trees to be seriously bothered. It was strange to [222]
see how this familiar old camp took new shape. Any vestiges of old 621
huts were cleared away, except for the remains of the one where I 122
had lived, and that of Ekianga, both of which were made better
and bigger. I did not take my old hut but moved to the far end,
where Cephu had been, near to Moke. Ekianga and all his three
wives, now on good terms with one another, were to the other side
of me.

621 of me. Masisi, still breathing fire and fury about the treachery of his
relatives, came to visit us from time to time; otherwise he kept strictly
to his own camp.

221 And so, after the Pygmies had taken advantage of the one season
621 they know, a season which allows them to forget about the cares of
communal hunting and the need for constant co-operation, the camp
was beginning to come together again. Every year this splitting up
takes place, and every year the forest draws its people back together.
Whatever frictions had existed were soon healed; a new year was
about to begin. Before this camp ended, Masisi would have found
some excuse to move a little farther north. Ekianga was already talking
of shifting a few hundred yards south, and Cephu would make
up his mind to jump this way or that. Everyone knew it, and within
a week of arriving at Apa Kadiketu they were talking about where
they would build their next camp, and how it would be one camp
again—until the next honey season.

114 But I would never know that next camp, so I made the most of my
last home in the forest, sharing it as always with a good and constant
friend. Maliamo set up house in Masisi's camp, and sometimes
Kenge stayed there, sometimes in the main camp. At all times the
forest was full of the song and dance of life. The games special to
221 the honey season filled the daylight hours and at dusk there was the
524 dance of the honeybees. Tremendous vine swings were slung from
526 the highest branches, and on these the youths practiced their acrobatics,
leaping and somersaulting in the air. When a vine broke it
was used for interminable games of tug of war, men against women.
But there was a conspicuous lack of gallantry in this particular game,
for if either side saw that it was losing ground it sent a saboteur into
the other ranks. It is difficult to concentrate on pulling at a line
221 when someone is flirting with you—as Pygmies do. But best of all
535 was the dance. Once again the men and the women divided, and

while the men pretended to be honey gatherers, dancing in a long 221
curling line through the camp, looking up with exaggerated gestures 535
as if searching for some sign of bees, the women danced in another
long line through the trees at the edge of the camp, pretending they
were the bees. The two lines gradually came closer and closer to-
gether, the women singing in a soft, rhythmic buzz, buzz, buzz,
while the men pretended to hear but still not to see them. Then the
women seized burning logs of wood and attacked the men, tapping
the logs on their heads so that a shower of sparks fell over them,
stinging them like the sting of the honeybee. At that they all gathered [372]
up the embers, and where some of the younger men had been build-
ing an elaborate hearth of special woods and special leaves, moistened
to just the right extent, they lit the great honey fire. There was
no flame, but dense clouds of smoke billowed upward. Men blew [534]
on their honey whistles, women clapped their hands, and everyone
burst into the song of magic that would travel with the smoke and
call the bees to come and make more honey.

On such occasions I found that Masisi and Cephu made their ap- 621
pearance more and more often, paving the way for a reunion at the
next camp. When the time came for me to leave all animosities had
been forgotten.

One day Kenge had gone off on some unknown mission and I 114
decided to make a final pilgrimage to Apa Lelo, where the cycle had
begun. This day of all days I wanted to be by myself, but there is
something about the forest, not exactly threatening, but challenging,
that dares you to travel alone. I had to refuse several Pygmies who
wanted to come with me, and once I was well away I was glad. I
knew what the challenge was, for to be alone was as though you were
daring to look on the face of the great God of the Forest himself, so
overpowering was the goodness and beauty of the world all around.
Every trembling leaf, every weathered stone, every cry of an animal

114 or chirp of a cricket tells you that the forest is alive with some presence.

As I splashed my way through the last stream and climbed to the top of the rise above Apa Lelo, the sounds of the forest grew louder. This was a friendly sign, but somehow it made me feel even more lonely. Then I came down into the old camp. The huts were rotted and collapsed, the clearing overgrown. As I roamed about, tracing where huts had been and remembering who had lived there, kicking idly with my feet in the hopes of finding some familiar object, it all began to live again. I wandered down to the Lelo, as calm and placid and beautiful as ever, and I thought of the molimo. As I looked into the waters where the trumpet had once been hidden, it was as if I heard its voice in the distance, gentle but insistent.

181 When I had bade my farewell to that very special river and returned to the camp, I saw it as it really was in the timelessness of the forest world—the huts strong and green, the fires burning brightly, and the air heavy with the scent of cooking. Lizabeti was running about with the other children, swinging happily on her crutches. The men helped one another to examine and repair their nets, while the women cooked and gossiped. Masisi was shouting at someone, and Manyalibo was trying to pacify him in his usual gruff, good-natured way. Old Moke sat back in his chair and puffed at his pipe, gazing up at the tree tops so very high above. I heard him murmur once
[778] more, "You will see things you have never seen before. . . . You will understand why we are called People of the Forest. . . . When the Forest dies, we shall die." And for the last time I heard the chorus of that great song of praise: "If Darkness *is*, Darkness is Good."

000 The camp and the people disappeared, leaving only a shimmering haze over Apa Lelo, but the song remained, for the song is the soul of the people and the soul of the forest. The molimo trumpet, now

infinitely wistful and far away, took up the song, and the forest 000 echoed it on with its myriad magic sounds.

It echoes on and on, and it will still be there when our short lives are silenced . . . until, perhaps like us, it comes to rest in the deepest distance of some other world beyond . . . the dream world that is so real to the People of the Forest.

[P. 280 is blank]

A Note on Pronunciation

No matter what language they speak, the BaMbuti all speak with the same singsong intonation. There is a fluctuating, musical warble as they talk, with a particular emphasis on the penultimate syllable which is always pitched very definitely higher or lower than all others, and held longer for emphasis. In single words also, the emphasis is on the penultimate, in this case generally pitched higher, lower for interrogative use.

Each vowel is pronounced clearly and has its full value, even in the case of double vowels (such as *Au*sa). Vowel equivalents are

194 approximately as below. Consonants are much as in English, but with the "g" always hard. "C" is rare, indicating something approaching a very soft "s." "L" and "r" are often interchangeable, always similar, both being made by flapping the tongue forward from the back of the palate. "Ph" is a soft "f."

Vowels

"a"	as in f*a*ther	example, M*asa*li'to
"e"	as in m*a*ke	K*e*'nge
"i"	as in f*ee*t	Mas*i*'*si*
"o"	as in *o*b*oe*	Nz*o*'b*o*
"u"	as in m*oo*n	A*u*'sa

(' follows the accented syllable, e.g., Nzo'bo)

Glossary

BaBira	The Negro village tribe with which the Epulu Pygmies have most contact. As is characteristic of Bantu peoples, *Ba* is a plural prefix, the tribal name being *Bira*. The singular prefix is *Mu*, and the prefix indicating the language of the people is *Ki*. Thus a *Mu*Bira speaks the *Ki*Bira language, as do all the *Ba*Bira villagers.
Bakpara	The term by which the Negroes refer to the relationship to the Pygmies; best translated "Masters."

104 **BaLese**	The major village tribe to the east and northeast of the Epulu district.
BaMbuti	General term for all Pygmies of the Ituri Forest.
BaNgwana	An Islamic tribe scattered throughout the area. Their unsavory reputation, acquired in the days when they aided and abetted the slave-traders, has continued right up to the present day. KiNgwana has become the lingua franca of the entire area.
Banja	A pair of short sticks, split into many strands at one end and clapped together on a log as rhythmic accompaniment to certain songs of the Pygmies, particularly the *molimo* songs.
Bantu	General term for all tribes speaking a certain type of language, characterized by the use of prefixes, as indicated under BaBira, above, etc. The Bantu peoples extend throughout eastern, southern, and central Africa.
Baraza	The meeting place of a family or village. Sometimes a large veranda built onto a house; more often a separate building consisting of a roof supported by poles, but with no walls.
Dawa	"Medicine"; may refer to effective herbs or equally to magical incantations or spells.
[551] [123] **Ebamunyama**	Literally, "His Father Killed an Animal"; the name which the Pygmies gave to me, being their condensation of the story that I told to explain my name, "Turnbull." (A borderland Scot saved the king's life by leaping on the back of a bull and turning it away from the king by twisting its

	neck. The family was rewarded with the title "Turner of the Bull," and with a crest of a bull with a broken neck.)
ELIMA	The festival celebrating the puberty of girls.
FITO	A young straight sapling, up to twelve feet in length, used in the construction of house frames, also as whips during certain ceremonies.
ITABA	A sweet root found only in the forest, considered a delicacy by the Pygmies.
KANGAY	The gardenia fruit, used by Pygmies to extract a black juice used for staining the body or for drawing patterns on bark cloth.
KENGE	An antelope, sometimes an okapi; such names are occasionally, but not often, given to children, as in the case of my helper and friend.
KUMAMOLIMO	"The heart of the *molimo*"—the central meeting place of the men's religious organization.
LENDU	A forest antelope, the size of a large dog, with sharp-pointed horns.
LIKO	A brew made by the Pygmies of forest berries, herbs, and cola nut.
MACHETTI	A large-bladed knife used for cutting fito, etc.
MANGESE	The Pygmy term, also used by some BaBira, for the elders. As used by Pygmies it can also refer to a youngster, if he has shown himself to be a "Great One" by some spectacular hunting achievement, say killing a buffalo or an elephant single-handed.

104 MBOLOKO	The smallest forest antelope, barely the size of a rabbit.
MOLIMO	The name given by the BaMbuti to the ritual performed at times of great crisis, and consisting primarily of songs sung nightly by the men. It is also the name given to the musical instrument, a long trumpet, usually of wood, that plays an important part in the ritual.
MONGONGO	A large heart-shaped leaf, sometimes nearly two feet across, used for thatching the roofs of huts by both the Pygmies and the villagers. They are laid like tiles, the upper row overlapping the lower.
NDURA	As used by the BaBira, this means the forest; as used by the Pygmies, it means the entire world. When Kenge saw the plain beyond the forest, with barely a tree in view, he referred to it as "ndura."
NGBENGBE	Two short sticks, stripped of bark and clapped together to give a hollow ringing tone. Used for rhythmic accompaniment to the honey songs of the Pygmies. Possibly in imitation of the sound of a honey ax chopping to get at the hive.
NKULA	Both the nut and the red wood of the nkula tree. The wood is scraped to give a red powder which makes a stain when mixed with water. Used for both body and bark-cloth decoration.
NKUSA	The vine from which the Pygmies make twine for their hunting nets.

GLOSSARY

Nyama	Any animal; also used as a term of abuse.
Okapi	A forest animal, related to the giraffe, found only in this area.
Panda	A gambling game played with beans which are thrown on the ground by two players. The skill consists in estimating at a glance how many beans have to be added to those on the ground to make up a multiple of four.
Sindula	The water chevrotain, an aquatic antelope which is particularly vicious when trapped. It is considered the best eating in the forest.
Sondu	A large forest antelope.
Tippu Tip	(also Tibbu Tib, etc.) Notorious slave-trader of the nineteenth century. From his headquarters on Zanzibar he sent out caravans through eastern and central Africa, using tribes such as the BaNgwana to round up slaves and ivory.

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114 *spent mainly in the then Belgian Congo, from 1957 to 1958.*

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[For numerous scattered references throughout this source on the author's participation in various Mbuti life cycle events, see whole text, category 116, passim.]

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Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[Information on begging and stealing of food from villages, since the practice is not regarded as a crime or symptom of Pygmy indigence but something the villagers simply tolerate, will be found under 177]